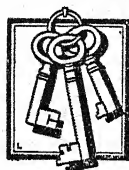


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DEMOCRACY
THE
THREATENED FOUNDATIONS

by

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To the Memory
of
PHILIP ANTHONY BROWN
and
ARTHUR GEORGE HEATH
Lovers of Democracy
who fell in war
1915



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PREFACE

DEMOCRACY has probably been more talked about in the last few years than ever before in the history of the world. In the vocabulary of Hitler and Mussolini the very name of it has become a term of abuse, while for English-speaking men and women everywhere it is the watch-word of a great ideal. But a word which is bandied about in this way is liable to lose some of its significance. Like a coin hard-worn in the traffic of many markets it runs the risk of getting defaced. And if our belief in Democracy is to retain its vitality and sustain us in the struggle in which we are engaged, we must not take it for granted without thinking about its nature and implications. It is indeed with words and ideas as with coins. If we pass coins from hand to hand without looking at them just because they are familiar, we may be deceived by a counterfeit. And when coins become defaced, an authentic coin may be deemed false merely because it is old and worn with long service.

- I believe that misunderstandings of the kind I have in mind are not uncommon. If this little book helps its readers to clear up any such misconceptions it will have fulfilled its purpose. Though the stern tasks of war allow most people little time for reflection, there is all the more reason for taking such opportunities as occur

of clarifying our notions about the principles which are at stake. For a war of ideas is going on behind the clash and tumult of the physical contest; and the issue will ultimately be decided, as always, by changes in the minds of men.

I wish to thank the Editors of the *Hibbert Journal* and the *Highway* for permission to use two articles of mine which were published by them and from which I have borrowed a few sentences instead of attempting to say the same thing in different and less suitable words. I am also grateful to Mr David Ogg and Mr K. K. M. Leys for advice on some historical points, and to Mr P. C. Bolam for information about taxation; but they are in no way responsible for the opinions I have expressed or for any mistakes I may have made. From the Editor of this series I have received much helpful advice; but the debt thus newly incurred is only one more addition to that which I have owed him ever since, many years ago, I became his pupil. His other pupils will know how much reason I have for gratitude.

R. LENNARD

Lower Heyford, August 1941

CHAPTER I

THE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

MANY YEARS ago Abraham Lincoln expressed the essence of Democracy in the famous phrase: 'Government of the People, by the People, for the People.' The phrase is now hackneyed and its significance is commonly overlooked. But there is a depth of meaning in its simple terms, and their force and relevance to current problems seem greater the more one reflects upon their implications.

'Government of the People, by the People' obviously implies that a People must be free to govern themselves—free from the interference of other Peoples—free from aggression and the fear of aggression. But, further, these words imply that the governed—that is to say, all those subject to the law of the State—are really one people and should be treated as such. There can be no government of the people by the people if any class among the governed is excluded from full citizenship. It follows, of course, that Slavery is incompatible with Democracy. It follows too that all persecution of minorities and all class-war is undemocratic. Whether the minority is large or small, and whether its members are rich or poor, Democracy requires that they shall be treated as fellow-citizens—not merely tolerated, but made to

feel that they are indeed a part of the People. That rules out religious tests for public offices or for employment in the State schools; and the toleration which admits the Catholic, the Jew and the agnostic must not strain at the communist or the 'conscientious objector'. But the principle carries us further still. If it implies that all minorities should be treated as part of the people, it implies also that it is their duty to behave as such, and not cling to privileges which mark them off from their fellows, nor let clannishness grow stronger than good citizenship. If class-war is a contradiction of Democracy, it is none the less true that Democracy is favourable to the social progress which leads towards a class-less society and is affronted by the spirit of exclusiveness wherever it appears and whether it is based on pride of birth, or pride of wealth, or the pride of self-conscious 'intellectuals'.

It is worthy of note that Lincoln spoke of 'Government by the People', not of 'Government by the Majority'. If we were to disfranchise a small section of the community—if for example we should lay it down that no hairdressers or dentists or millionaires might have a vote or take any part in politics—we might still have 'Government by the Majority', but it would not be a Democracy. In a Democracy the will of the majority must prevail; but more than that is implicit in the democratic ideal of 'Government by the People'. There is a world of difference between a majority decision taken after the opinions of minorities have

been heard and considered and one reached in ignorance of what can be said on the other side. It is essential to Democracy that all should be able to make their wishes known—that every minority should have the right of trying to convert the majority to their way of thinking. That means free speech. But we can go beyond that. ‘Government by the People’ is an ideal which takes us beyond the mere principle that minorities shall be heard and that every citizen shall have a right to express his views. Rights without the capacity to use them are of little value. And though it may not be necessary that every citizen should be able to make a political speech, it is necessary that each and all should at least be able to form a reasonable judgment upon the arguments which political leaders employ. In other words, Education is necessary as well as Free Speech.

And what of the third clause in the Gettysburg motto? What of the bold assumption that ‘Government by the People’ will be, or at least may be, identical with ‘Government for the People’? ‘Government for the People’ must mean government in the interest of the whole people, and not in the interest of any privileged class or section. But that is not so simple as it sounds. We cannot suppose that every act of government must directly benefit everybody. Governments would find very little to do, if they were restricted to such actions. For example, such an interpretation of the principle would make it impossible to levy taxes to

pay for old age pensions, for the old are only a section of the people, and we can scarcely pretend that taxpayers are directly benefited by the demands of the tax-collector. It seems to me that what 'Government for the People' really implies is that the government in all its actions should consider the interests of the people as a whole. It is often necessary to do things which are contrary to individual or sectional interests; but the interests which all share must always be respected, especially the vital interest which all have in the maintenance of that spirit of unity without which Democracy would become impossible and government by discussion give way either to anarchy or to government by coercion. The unity which Democracy requires is not unanimity. Thinking alike and feeling alike is not a democratic ideal. That is the ideal of Totalitarianism—*Gleichgestaltung*—an ideal strikingly exemplified in the Gadarene swine when the whole herd of them 'ran violently down a steep place into the sea and perished in the waters'. In contrast to such unanimity, it is the mark of Democracy that under it people, as we say, 'agree to differ'. That trite and well-worn phrase is rich in meaning. It helps us to penetrate more deeply into the significance of the terms 'Government by the People' and 'Government for the People'. In a Democracy, when we differ, we settle our differences peacefully by 'counting heads instead of breaking them'. The majority decides. But the very word 'majority' not only implies the use of this peaceful and

orderly method of counting: it implies that the majority and the minority together form a whole, that they are in fact one People. We may say that the inhabitants of Rutland are a minority and that Englishmen who do not dwell in Rutland are a majority, but we could not use these terms in comparing the population of Rutland with the population of China. An underlying unity is presupposed by the conceptions 'majority' and 'minority'. And whatever else we may infer from the nature of 'Government for the People', there can surely be no doubt about the conclusion that it must be compatible with the maintenance of that unity, not merely as a formal and legal thing, but as a fundamental harmony of feeling. In minorities and majorities alike the democratic ideal requires a high quality of citizenship. All must recognize the duties which are correlative to their rights. Minorities must always remember that the right to have their views heard and their interests considered carries with it a far-reaching, if not wholly unlimited, duty of loyally accepting the decisions of the majority. And the majority, in reaching its decisions, must always remember that the minority are also a part of the people. It must treat them with consideration. It must not press its own views to the point of outraging the minority. In short the majority must exercise the faculty which we call 'political sense'; that is to say, it must do nothing which will destroy, or even seriously impair, the will of the minority to remain fellow-

citizens of the majority, but always act in such a way that the fundamental agreement which underlies all our differences will be preserved. It is in such ways that, in a Democracy, men 'agree to differ'. In place of the blatant unison of Totalitarianism, Democracy sets the ideal of a harmony which is rich and full just because it is made up of many different notes.

When the nature of 'Government for the People' is described in these general terms, it sounds 'too good to be true' and one is tempted to doubt the possibility of 'Government by the People' being actually exercised with the wisdom and forbearance which 'Government for the People' demands. Yet the operations of politics in England do in fact commonly display the democratic qualities of forbearance and political sense in a remarkable degree—so much so indeed that many adherents of the democratic faith, especially the young and inexperienced, are offended because of these things and doubt the reality of a Democracy in which reforms are introduced so slowly and no political party appears to 'mean business'. In any case, Democracy is more than a form of government. It is a social ideal; and the difficulty of the ideal is commensurate with its nobility. Like all the best ideals of men, it reveals, not something to be easily and finally attained, but a vista of possible progress which seems to have no limit. The service of such an ideal calls for high qualities of head and heart; and among those qualities not the least important are the intellectual realism which frankly recognizes the

existence of difficulties and the faith which refuses to be discouraged by their magnitude but sees in them a call to effort. Two practical conclusions seem to follow. First, we find once more that the cause of Democracy is closely bound up with the cause of Education. 'Government by the People' cannot really be 'Government for the People' unless the People understand what will really contribute to the general welfare and in particular develop that peculiarly 'educated' capacity for understanding other men's point of view which is the only sure basis for such treatment of minorities as Democracy demands. And secondly—since the democratic ideal requires that we should recognize realities and not expect more from human nature as it is than our knowledge of it really justifies—the cause of Democracy is closely bound up with the cause of what we call 'social reform'. That is so, not only because such reform is necessary to the general welfare and must therefore be one of the objects of 'Government for the People', but also because you cannot expect men to think democratically of the welfare of the whole people, so long as glaring social injustices drive them to give most of their attention to sectional interests.

Since it is based on a belief in reason and on confidence in the results of free discussion, but at the same time fully recognizes the existence of difficulties, Democracy is far from having a uniform programme for all nations at every stage of social development.

Uniformity belongs to it as little as unanimity. And here we can learn something—and something which is peculiarly relevant to some of the most obstinate of current problems—from what Lincoln omitted to say. He did not define either the word ‘Government’ or the word ‘People’.

Of government we may certainly say that, if the People are to be governed by the People, they must enjoy political independence: they must be free to govern themselves. But we are not compelled to limit Democracy to any one form or mode of government: within wide limits variety is admissible. There is nothing at all in Lincoln’s phrase to suggest that Democracy favours either a federal state or a unitary state, or that it is necessarily promoted by any particular electoral method such as proportional representation or the second ballot. We are surely justified in inferring that what Democracy requires is that in all such matters we should aim at the particular arrangements which in the given conditions of a particular society at a particular time are most likely to make ‘Government by the People’ operate as ‘Government for the People’. It is the same with the scope of government action. Democracy is not as such identified with any predetermined degree of ‘state interference’. It depends on circumstances of time and place whether, for example, the ideal of Democracy will be best served by a socialistic economic system or by one which leaves a large part of the economic

sphere to private enterprise. And, finally, while political independence is essential in regard to the government of each people, there is nothing in the phrase 'Government of the People, by the People, for the People' to make us suppose that the relations of one People to another should be left to the unrestricted interplay of completely 'sovereign' states. Democracy only insists upon international arrangements being such that every people is really free to govern itself.

Like the word 'Government', the word 'People' too is significantly vague. Lincoln left the 'People' undefined. He said nothing about their belonging to a particular race, nothing about their being inhabitants of a particular territory, nothing even about their historic identity. It would appear therefore that these things, though obviously important, are yet not essential. The essential thing, without which 'Government of the People, by the People, for the People' is impossible, is just that those subjected to a particular Government shall be in fact one People, able to live in loyal fellow-citizenship one with another. But if true Democracy implies this deep harmony—if it postulates a sense of unity so firmly rooted that men can, as we say, 'agree to differ' without the fundamental unity of the People being impaired—then it follows that Democracy does not require the continuance of political unions on grounds of geography, or race, or history, if the harmony and the sense of unity are in reality wanting. We may agree with Burke that

political unions are not like mere business partnerships 'to be taken up for a little temporary interest and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties'. But as with the union of husband and wife in marriage, so also in regard to political states, the more deeply we feel that a real union of hearts is necessary, the more we are bound to recognize that legal unions should not as such be indissoluble. The principles of Democracy were not violated by the American Declaration of Independence, or by the severance of Norway and Sweden, or by the creation of the Irish Free State. Those principles were not necessarily opposed to the severance of the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia. But they were outraged by the inclusion of the Czech people as a protectorate in the German Reich. To the believer in Democracy, however, neither the case for the secession of the Sudeten Germans, nor that for the independence of the Czechs, can be based merely on the racial contrast between German and Slav. What matters is not the racial contrast but the absence of a common will. There is racial diversity in Switzerland, but Switzerland provides the finest example in the world of a People whose common will and sense of unity transcends the differences of race and language and religion.

CHAPTER II

THE SPIRIT OF ENGLISH DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY is less easy to understand than other modes of political and social life; and one of the reasons for this is the variety of forms which it may assume. In the matter of constitutional arrangements—the franchise, the structure of parliament, the relations of central and local authorities and the like—there is a room for variation in Democracy which cannot be found under the shadow of autocratic rule. But the variability is not confined to the pattern of political institutions. Democracies may differ a good deal in spirit, in the manner of their development, in the pace and mode of their advance towards the fuller application and clearer working out of democratic principles. And this is due to the nature of Democracy.

In ultimate analysis Democracy is based upon two assumptions. On the one hand, it assumes that reason, and not appetite or passion, should guide the conduct of human affairs. On the other hand, it recognizes that human reason is imperfect, and that truth cannot be ascertained once and for all either by a plebiscite or by the insight of an all-wise Führer; it admits that the reason of the wisest is liable to be cramped by ignorance or distorted by self-interest; and it acknowledges that in practical affairs it is often necessary to feel our way

by the method of trial and error. Hence Democracy postulates discussion, welcomes variety of opinions, and expects the search for social welfare to be made in diverse ways and by manifold experiments.

The variety of Democracy, if puzzling, is also highly instructive. We can learn a great deal about the nature of the democratic ideal from a comparative study of French and English institutions, as Dr Thomson has shown in his book on the subject.¹ But the full measure of the contrast between Democracy in England and Democracy in France is only revealed by history (as indeed Dr Thomson points out), for the differences between the institutional contours of the two countries, and between the political and social postures of the two peoples at a given time, are scarcely as significant as those discernible in the actual processes of change by which Democracy has developed. Roughly speaking, we may say that French Democracy has grown by alternations of Revolution and Reaction, English Democracy by a process of gradual development. The French have dashed forward in clamorous enthusiasm under waving banners of democratic doctrine, and then have fallen back discouraged and disillusioned until a new access of faith inspired them to fresh advance. The English have just plodded on, seldom knowing clearly where they were going and not thinking much about it, but getting forward all the

¹ David Thomson, *The Democratic Ideal in France and England* (1940).

time and never going back. 'There have been men', says Yeats, 'who loved the future like a mistress, and the future mixed her breath into their breath and shook her hair about them and hid them from the understanding of their times.'¹ Those words might be applied not unjustly to some of the prophets and martyrs of the democratic faith in France; but there has never been much either of the glory or the weakness of that kind of thing about John Bull, whose first great Reform Bill was, as Mr Osbert Sitwell remarks, 'forced through the House of Commons, not so much at the point of the knife or bayonet, as at the ferrule of an umbrella'.²

He would be a bold man who should attempt to say whether the English or the French have as yet progressed farthest along the democratic road. But it is easy to see that the different methods of advance which have been followed in the two countries are natural to their peoples. They have their roots in differences of temperament and mental habit which can be traced far back in history. 'Frenchmen', says Bryce, 'have always shown, along with their gift for generalizing, an enjoyment of and a faith in general theories beyond that of the other free peoples.'³ A French critic, less sympathetic to Democracy than Bryce, has recently spoken more strongly in the same sense. 'Cette pré-

¹ W. B. Yeats, *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903), p. 168.

² *New Statesman*, 1 November 1924, p. 110.

³ James Bryce, *Modern Democracies* (1921), vol. 1, p. 233.

dominance de l'idéologie et cette inattention aux réalités, qui caractérisent la Démocratie en France, expriment certainement des tendances profondes du tempérament national, qu'on retrouve à toutes les époques, et qui n'apparaissent plus nettement sous ce régime que parce qu'il est essentiellement un régime d'opinion."¹ The contrast between England and France can be discerned even in the middle ages. We think of the shining enthusiasm of the French for the Crusades at a time when the knights and barons of England were busy with such humdrum enterprises as the piecemeal conquest of Wales; and we reflect that the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was a fragile and short-lived structure and that the conquest of Wales was permanent. The great legacy of the middle ages to modern democracy—the idea of representation—was not peculiarly English, for a representative assembly emerged in medieval France as well as in medieval England; but the French States General became atrophied under the heel of a splendid but despotic monarchy, while the Parliament of England, though often clumsy in action and narrow in outlook, added precedent to precedent and power to power until it was fitted to become the chief instrument of modern English Democracy and the mother and model of many parliaments throughout the world.

It is natural for an Englishman—especially at a time when the love of England is intensified by her perils—

¹ Louis Reynaud, *La démocratie en France* (1938), p. 196.

to exalt the achievements of his own country. But even an impartial observer could scarcely deny that the historical process by which Democracy has developed in England has been itself more in accord with democratic principles than the hurried, violent and fitful, but logical and idea-inspired movements by which French Democracy has advanced. In England the growth of Democracy has been marked by patience, by consideration for the feelings of minorities, by the political sense which refrains from pushing things to extremes and does not invite reaction. We have not rushed the barriers of prejudice, but have limited the pace and range of our reforms so that they could be at length accepted by the whole people with nothing worse than the arm-chair grumbling which is one of our national recreations.

Much that is puzzling in English Democracy and liable to produce misunderstanding of its nature is a direct consequence of the manner of its growth. It was Maitland, I think, who once said that we English 'never clean our slates'. And undoubtedly the institutions and conventions of English society are a curious hotch-potch. Scarcely anything is wholly new. In scarcely anything do we find principles carried out to their logical conclusion. Old things are fitted to new uses, and anachronisms which seem to have no use at all, and are not always picturesque, abound. As a result it is easy to be deceived as to the character of the whole. In the reign of Charles II a French am-

bassador, with a discernment which is still characteristic of the diplomats of France, reported to his master that the Government of England 'has a monarchical appearance, because there is a King, but at bottom it is very far from being a monarchy'.¹ That judgment is still true; but to-day we might say, with greater truth, that England is at bottom a Democracy, but is far from having a very democratic appearance. Observers in the New Worlds overseas, and also those among ourselves whose youthful omniscience is the happy and natural product of hasty and wide-ranging glances, are very liable to be misled by the appearances, for the anachronisms and the oddities, just because they are out of keeping with the general structure, obtrude themselves upon the attention and seem more important than they are.

English faith in Democracy is deep-rooted, like the institutions in which it is embodied. We are all of us democrats at heart, though some do not know that they are, and some suppose that faith in Democracy is confined to members of their own political party or even to an elect few within it. The differences between our political parties are real and important. That is as it should be in a Democracy; for Democracy would lose all its vitality if there were no political divisions or only such as did not represent significant differences of opinion. Without the discussion and criticism to which

¹ The remark is quoted by G. M. Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts* (1904), p. 340. It was made by the Comte de Cominges.

substantial divisions give rise, it would be little better than an empty catchword. But Democracy would also be impossible if the members of all parties did not feel themselves to be members of one People. It is really because we are united in fundamental things that we can 'agree to differ' in the way that Democracy demands. And one of the fundamental things on which we are united is our faith in Democracy. To many that will seem a startling and questionable statement. Undoubtedly some who belong to the 'right wing' in politics think that they do not believe in Democracy; and undoubtedly some who belong to the 'left wing' regard their opponents as opponents of Democracy. But in such thinking two things are confused. It is as if one were to deny that the American people as a whole believe in Democracy because only part of them belong to the political party called 'Democrats'. The differences between our English political parties, so far as they are concerned with Democracy, are really only differences on the question whether, and, if so, how and at what pace, we should continue to advance along the road to a more complete democracy. Behind all our differences there is a core of democratic faith which is accepted, consciously or unconsciously, by all the parties which count in British politics.

To those actively engaged in the everyday debates of political life it sometimes seems as if the differences were the only realities in question, and the victory of one party over another the only thing that matters.

But to the historian, whose view extends beyond the events of the hour and beyond the limits of his own lifetime, a larger and truer perspective is revealed. He sees that the points in dispute between the parties are always shifting; and always he finds that the centre between them moves from generation to generation in the direction of a fuller, richer and more complete Democracy. The left-wing heresies of one generation become the accepted presuppositions of all parties in another. That does not mean that the opinions of the 'left' have always been sound. Questions of time and place, and of the fitness of society for another step forward at a given time, are very important questions; and the acceptance of new ideas has always been accompanied by some purging away of foolish or impracticable elements. One historical example may be cited. Of the six points which formed the extreme left-wing programme of the Chartists a hundred years ago, five are now to all intents embodied in our law. And each of these five is now accepted by all parties without question. But no party, either of the left or of the right, would now desire the 'annual parliaments' which formed the remaining Chartist demand. And it is surely significant that the 'point' which has thus passed into oblivion is the one which, in practice, would not strengthen, but gravely weaken, Democracy.

CHAPTER III

THE ROOTS OF DEMOCRACY IN ENGLAND

To those who dwell in the British Dominions beyond the seas, England is familiarly known as 'The Old Country'. There could hardly be a more fitting description. Though the term is used primarily to mark the contrast between the ancient homeland and those regions of the world which have been made English countries by modern colonization, England is an old country in a deeper and truer sense than any of the great countries of the European continent. Though they too have been the homes of civilized human societies for many centuries, and though no English city can boast the antiquity of Athens or Rome and no English institution is as old as the Papacy, there is none of the greater continental nations whose life has so many roots in the distant past as England. King George VI is the descendant and successor of the old Saxon rulers of Wessex; and the shires which are still so important in English local government were already important in the tenth century and were even then not new in the south of England. The English Parliament, as a national assembly to which elected representatives of the shires were summoned, goes back to the thirteenth century; the office of Lord Chancellor dates from the time of William the Conqueror if not earlier;

eleven English bishoprics are of Saxon origin, seven of them dating from the seventh century and the see of Canterbury from the sixth. And no one of these things is in any sense a museum piece: each of these ancient institutions and offices is still active in the life of modern England. It is much the same with the great English towns. In spite of all the changes in economic geography caused by the 'Industrial Revolution', some of the oldest of English towns are to-day among our leading cities. We think of some whose greatness or economic importance has made them the chosen objects of German aerial bombardment. London was the largest town in Roman Britain, celebrated for its merchants in the first century, and probably for a time the centre of government; and though in the early Saxon period it cannot have been more than a half-ruined slum and may have been altogether deserted, the port of Saxon London had acquired some importance before the middle of the eighth century.¹ Bristol and Southampton were among the greatest ports of medieval England: Coventry was a leading industrial centre, and in the latter part of the fourteenth century was probably one of the four largest provincial

¹ The inhabitants of Roman London learnt the meaning of 'evacuation' and experienced the ravages of war at the time of Boudicca's rising in A.D. 61 (see Tacitus, *Annals*, xiv, 33). Professor Collingwood says that 'to this day, men digging in the city find everywhere the layer of ashes which is all that was left when her men had done their work': *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (1937), p. 102.

towns.¹ We think of coal-mining as something especially connected with modern industry; but it seems that 'practically all the English coal fields were being worked to some extent' by the end of the thirteenth century.² Villages are usually old in most old countries, and many French villages go back, as our English villages do not, to the period of Roman rule; but none the less the signs of continuity from century to century are in some ways more noticeable in the villages of England than in those of other lands. In the fabric and furnishings of an English village church—still used Sunday by Sunday for the worship of the village folk—it is not at all uncommon to find the handiwork of every century from the twelfth or thirteenth to the twentieth. And, turning to another sphere, we see the same continuity in the history of our ancient schools and universities: in spite of countless new schools and several new universities and university colleges, a remarkably large part is still played in English education by foundations of medieval origin.³

¹ R. A. Pelham, in *An Historical Geography of England* (ed. H. C. Darby, 1936), p. 233.

² L. F. Salzman, *English Industries of the Middle Ages* (1913), p. 6.

³ More than half the men's colleges at Cambridge and nearly half the men's colleges at Oxford were founded before 1500: of the total of 38 at both taken together, 32 were founded before 1600. Of the 179 schools which belong to the Headmasters' Conference, 88 claim to date from before 1600. Many names distinguished in very 'modern' movements and specifically 'modern' thought figure among the alumni of these or other

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In this old country Democracy is something new and still incomplete. But even Democracy in England has its roots in the past; and the unique strength of our Democracy is to a great extent due to that fact. The institutions by which democratic government is carried on in Great Britain are not new creations formed 'by a sudden jerk of authority' in disregard of tradition: they are developments of things old and tried, and are founded on habits of mind and feeling which have become inveterate. Hence old loyalties, instead of being outraged and driven into irreconcilable opposition, have been harnessed to the chariot of progress, and serve to make its advance more sure.

ancient educational institutions. Major Attlee, the Leader of the Labour Party, was an undergraduate at University College, Oxford (13th century): Mr Lees-Smith, who leads the Party while Major Attlee holds office, was at Queen's College, Oxford (14th century): Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr Pritt and Sir Oswald Mosley were at school at Winchester College (14th century). Professor Tawney was at Rugby (16th century) and at Balliol (13th century). Mr G. D. H. Cole was educated at St Paul's School (founded 1509) and at Balliol. Professor J. B. S. Haldane was at Eton (15th century) and New College (14th century); Mr Julian Huxley at Eton and Balliol. Mr Aldous Huxley was also at Eton and Balliol; Mr Priestley was at Trinity Hall (14th century); Professor H. J. Laski at Manchester Grammar School (founded 1515) and New College; Mr J. Middleton Murry at Christ's Hospital and Brasenose (both 16th century); Mr T. S. Eliot at Merton (13th century); Mr W. H. Auden at Gresham's School, Holt, and Christ Church (both 16th century); Mr L. MacNeice at Merton. 'The old nursery gardens evidently produce new and many-coloured varieties of flowers!

Almost the first really vivid scene in the history of the English People is that of a conference—the meeting of the Northumbrian Witan which about 626 or 627 decided to accept the Christian faith. It was an aristocratic assembly; but there were speeches, and a matter of the first importance was settled by talking it over. In that practice of settling things by talking them over we have the indispensable pre-requisite of Democracy—in contrast to the Italian practice of settling affairs, as Professor Trevelyan once put it, by ‘a row in the piazza’. And it meant much for the future that in a generation when the continuity of English institutional development was near being broken, William the Conqueror continued that practice and did not venture upon the first great achievement of efficient bureaucracy on English soil (the compilation of Domesday Book) until he had held ‘very deep speech with his wise men’. It was long before the King’s Council was anything but a highly aristocratic body and long before it became an effective check upon the autocratic actions of the peculiarly strong monarchy of medieval England. But in humbler spheres of life men were also talking things over and settling by that process the homely local matters which they understood. For the lesser landlords, if not for the common people, the ancient shire courts must have served as schools of self-government. In every village too, however much the operations of farming were governed by a customary routine, there were some things which

had to be discussed, especially in those regions of Danish settlement where the division of the village lands among several lords made it impossible for all decisions to be taken by the lord's steward and much must have been left for the peasants to arrange for themselves.¹ The election of the 'reeve' by the peasants seems to have become gradually more frequent, and was an educative practice because those who elected him might be liable to the lord for loss occasioned by his dishonesty or his mistakes, so that they had a strong economic motive for picking a man who was trustworthy and efficient.² In the towns, the numerous guilds in their 'morning-speeches' gave to many the task of deciding many and varied matters by discussion, while the strain upon their capacity for such peaceful methods was no doubt reduced by the fact that the guild members were associated for religious, charitable and convivial purposes as well as for the regulation of trade and industry. 'Their internal affairs', says Unwin, 'furnished an excellent training in self-government and administration, whilst their intervention in

¹ We may share Maitland's scepticism about the existence of village moots, as distinct from the manorial courts, and yet agree with Vinogradoff that Maitland exaggerated the automatism of open-field agriculture. In any case, the clearing of woodland, to which so much medieval energy was devoted, cannot have been a matter of routine: much talk and scratching of heads—perhaps some breaking of heads too—and some eventual compromise as regards conflicting claims must have accompanied these enterprises.

² H. S. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor* (1937), pp. 169-171.

municipal, and occasionally in national, politics gave their ambitious members a wider scope for their powers.' Indeed Unwin ventures to describe the medieval gilds as 'the chief instrument in the formation of that series of middle classes by whose efforts the principle of self-government was first realized in the narrower sphere of civic life, and thence transplanted to the wider sphere of the national State'.¹

During the thirteenth century the great step was taken of summoning to certain meetings of the King's Council, first, knights elected to represent the shires, and then, a little later, both burgesses elected to represent the leading towns, and elected representatives of the lesser clergy. The addition of these representatives to the national assembly (which, thus augmented, became a regular feature of the constitution in the fourteenth century) cannot be regarded as a purely English development; nor was it due to any popular movement against autocratic rule or to the influence of any theory of government. Nobody with an 'Ism' in his head helped to lay these foundation stones of English Democracy. Nobody thought of them as foundations on which a great and enduring superstructure was to be built. The kings by whom these innovations were introduced only desired to strengthen the Crown. The baronial opposition to the

¹ George Unwin, *Studies in Economic History* (1927), pp. 92-93 (reprint of an article originally published in 1912 in *A Cyclopaedia of Education*, edited by Paul Monroe).

despotism of John and Henry III only contributed to the growth of Parliament in so far as it led the kings to look for support outside the ranks of the greater barons; and this political motive was probably less important than a desire to meet the financial difficulties of a period of rising prices, combined with appreciation of the fact that the co-operation of the representatives would make it easier to tap the increased wealth of the non-baronial classes by the taxation of movable property. In various ways the new developments had been prepared for by centralization of the administration of justice during the last half of the twelfth century; and contemporaries do not seem to have perceived that anything novel or important was happening. But in fact a great revolution had been accomplished. The principle of Representation had been introduced in an institution which was destined to continue and develop its use without any real interruption to the present day.¹

It is the growth of an oak, not the planting of an acorn, which changes the landscape; and that which really distinguishes the constitutional history of England is the survival and growth of the Parliament which in the thirteenth century had sprouted as a tiny seedling. To a superficial observer the history may appear like a chapter of accidents. The wars of the fourteenth century put a strain upon the royal finances

¹ Cp. Stubbs, *Historical Introductions to the Rolls Series* (ed. A. Hassall, 1902), pp. 291-292.

and made Parliament increasingly useful to the Government as an instrument of taxation; while, along with the large-looming factors of the Scottish and French wars, the historian is obliged to attach some degree of importance to the tiny administrative accident that the shire-knights and the burgesses were both summoned to Parliament by writs addressed to the sheriffs and were therefore more ready to combine together in a House of Commons. In the sixteenth century also, much seems to turn upon the play of chance. In his quarrel with the Papacy, Henry VIII needed the support of public opinion, so that the most despotic of English monarchs became a 'great architect of parliament'.¹ And, as an incidental consequence of the sixteenth-century rise of prices, the county franchise, based upon the ownership of a freehold worth 40s. a year, was automatically extended, so that persons of humbler economic position were included among the electors and the electorate became at once more numerous and more varied in composition. But if Fortune, in these manifold ways, played a considerable part in the development of the English Parliament, both in the middle ages and in the dangerous period when feudal kingship was growing elsewhere into absolute monarchy, Fortune played her role, as she usually does, in the guise of Opportunity. The circumstances proved to be favourable because they presented

¹ The term is used by Professor Pollard, *The Evolution of Parliament* (1920), p. 126.

opportunities to men who had the energy and good sense to make the most of them. Behind the history of the central government and its organs there lies a motley background of social life where men were learning and practising, with various experiments and in all kinds of institutions and associations, those essential arts of discussion, fair dealing and compromise, without which self-government must fail to satisfy the human need for some sort of order and some approximation to justice.

The English Parliament owes much to the amalgamation of the knights and burgesses which was gradually brought about during the fourteenth century and created the House of Commons. Their union meant that the humble 'popular' element in Parliament was stiffened by association with a class which combined military importance, administrative experience and aristocratic self-confidence. It meant also that the Lords and Commons could act together against the Crown. The knights were a link which made such co-operation possible, for both the temporal peers and the knights belonged to the feudal aristocracy, and, since only the eldest son of a peer succeeded to his father's peerage, the brothers of peers were commoners and could be elected as knights of the shire.

To trace the play of forces making for and against the combination of the knights and burgesses is a fascinating historical task; but the outstanding fact which needs emphasis here is that effective combina-

tion would have been impossible if the two groups had been separated by too great a degree of class-consciousness and had been fundamentally distrustful of each other. At bottom the House of Commons owes its existence to the sustained capacity of individual Englishmen in successive generations to talk things over and reach agreement with other Englishmen who differed from them in social rank and in experience of life. The combination was voluntary. It was not imposed by authority. It was not what the logic of theoretical constitution-making would have suggested. In France logic prevailed. The States General of medieval France was an assembly in which each social class—nobles, clergy and *bourgeois*—formed a separate 'estate'. For that reason they were unable to combine against the Crown, and the kings were able to build up the French monarchy into a despotism by playing off the various estates against one another. In France too there was a more logical specialization of functions. The States General was not like the English Parliament a court of law as well as a deliberative assembly. And that also meant weakness. In England, because the two functions were combined, and Parliament was a court of law which could redress grievances, the representatives of shires and towns (who disliked the interruption of their lives by troublesome journeys to Parliament), and also their constituents (who grudged the wages they had to pay them), were reconciled to duties which otherwise they might have

regarded only as a nuisance, and became interested in the maintenance of Parliament as they would not have been if Parliament had been merely an instrument for taxing them.

It is easy to make too much of the medieval Parliament. In the fifteenth century it was 'still ancillary to the Council, which remained the permanent governing power of the realm'.¹ Throughout the middle ages the Parliament was a very feeble thing, judged by any modern standard; and its activities were intermittent and faltering. But it had established itself. During the fourteenth century the nobles found it advisable to use Parliament as the instrument of their ambitions rather than baronial committees of the type they had previously favoured; and the Crown failed in its attempt to secure a satisfactory source of revenue by extra-parliamentary bargains with the 'Estate of Merchants'.² At times of crisis, the Parliament might be only a subservient tool of external factions, but by legalizing the most drastic acts of such factions it laid down precedents for future use. And if in the Yorkist period the Crown became more active and the Commons less active in Parliament than had been the case under the Lancastrians, the fact that the King used Parliament is, none the less significant. It is significant too that, by

¹ J. E. A. Jolliffe, *The Constitutional History of Medieval England* (1937), p. 441.

² For the Estate of Merchants as 'a dangerous rival to the House of Commons', see George Unwin in *Finance and Trade under Edward III* (1918), pp. 179-255.

the third quarter of the fifteenth century, an English judge, writing his reflections upon *The Governance of England* could draw a contrast between the absolute monarchy of France and the constitutional monarchy of England, and that, in the next generation, the Spanish ambassador at the English court could say of the first of the Tudor sovereigns: 'He would like to govern England in the French fashion, but he cannot.'¹

The trend towards absolute monarchy, which marks this period on the continent, can certainly be recognized in the history of Tudor England. The scope of government was enormously enlarged; governmental activity was to an increased degree directed by the royal will; and at times the force of the State became a mere instrument of personal caprice. But the individuality of the English development is as clearly marked as the features which it shares with the contemporary development of continental states. If the old opponents of the medieval monarchy—the aristocracy and the Church—were reduced to subservience, the Parliament which the Tudors inherited from the middle ages was preserved and more than preserved, for it was employed by the Crown as a partner in enterprises of revolutionary character and, schooled in the

¹ Sir John Fortescue, *The Governance of England* (ed. Charles Plummer, 1885), pp. 109, 113-116; *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, I, 210, p. 178, quoted H. A. L. Fisher, *The Political History of England, 1485-1547* (1906), p. 124.

performance of these tasks, grew in strength and self-confidence. The ancient Common Law Courts too, though their position was threatened by the prerogative jurisdiction of the Council and its offshoots, continued to stand for 'the medieval conception of the supremacy of law in the State and over the State' and their tenacious conservatism made them a powerful ally of Parliament. Thus, as Mr Keir says, the old system of government 'in all its parts, continued not only unimpaired, but strengthened, while elsewhere in Europe systems similarly fashioned during the Middle Ages atrophied and perished, leaving the sole exercise of political power to centralized absolute monarchies'.¹ In England one of the chief dangers lay in the increase of royal revenue by the plunder of the Church; but war expenditure under Henry VIII and Edward VI, and the continuing fall in the value of money, prevented the Crown from attaining real financial independence and made Parliament an indispensable instrument of government. Meanwhile all risk that the loyalty which sustained the Tudor monarchy might degenerate into a spirit of totalitarian acquiescence was removed by a growth of religious and economic discontent. The increasing diversity of religious beliefs combined with a general revival of religious fervour to make many people dissatisfied with the ecclesiastical system of Elizabeth, while the rising spirit of economic indi-

¹ D. L. Keir, *The Constitutional History of Modern Britain, 1485-1937* (1938), pp. 133, 100, cp. pp. 27-28.

vidualism chafed against the obstacles to gainful enterprise which were presented alike by the ill-judged system of monopolies and by the well-meant efforts of the Government to save the poor from oppression.¹

Strengthened by co-operation with the Tudors, the English Parliament in the succeeding age attained to new heights of power through conflict with the Stuarts. One might perhaps say that at the accession of James I the organs of government moved in orbits which had for their centre, not a single *Roi-Soleil*, but a double star—the King in Council and the King in Parliament. A century later the radiant splendour of authority had become dimmed in the former to a degree which assured the supremacy of the latter. Further, within the triune structure of Parliament, the elected House of Commons had acquired increased importance at the expense both of the Crown and of the House of Lords; and, in the nation at large, however unsatisfactory the franchise and the methods of election might be, there can be discerned a deepened sense that these things provided an instrument by which the will of the people could and should be expressed. It was by conflict that the new constitutionalism was established. But the dramatic interest of the

¹ 'Tudor despotism', says Professor Wallace Notestein, 'by its very nature contained within itself the seeds of its own decay; it was leading on to a more active House of Commons, certain in time to demand power': *The Winning of the Initiative by the House of Commons* (Raleigh Lecture for 1924), in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1924-1925, pp. 169-70.

Civil War is liable to obscure the importance of the results attained in the earlier stages of the struggle, before the doctrinaire spirit of extremists carried the issue beyond the field of political controversy and manœuvre and forced an appeal to arms. In fact much was achieved, and achieved by peaceful methods, even before the beginning of the Long Parliament. It was in these early days of the Stuart dynasty that the King's Council lost control of the House of Commons and that the initiative in politics passed to independent members who did not hesitate to oppose the royal policy.¹ And the really lasting victories for constitutional government were those won by the legislation of the Long Parliament in a constitutional way.² The storms which followed involved the eclipse of Parliament as well as the destruction of the Monarchy and led to a military despotism. This was the greatest interruption in the whole course of English institutional development; but even the 'industrious valour' and statesmanship of Cromwell were in fact unable to 'ruin the great work of time', and within two years of his death both the Monarchy and the Parliament were restored. To Dryden it seemed that the 'factious souls' were 'wearied into peace'; and the history of the next half century has some resemblance to the heavings and

¹ This is the main thesis of Professor Notestein's Raleigh Lecture.

² J. R. Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century* (1928), pp. 99-100.

oscillations of a storm-tossed sea gradually sinking into calm. Among the doctrines and schemes which had found advocates in the tumult of theory and experiment, some had been as democratic as they were crude and visionary; but the Democracy of modern England owes far less to these aspiring novelties of thought than to the spirit of prudence and moderation which the sufferings of the war and the extravagances of the interregnum had done so much to inculcate. If Charles II was determined not to go on his travels again, the People were also determined not to travel on any roads leading to a new civil war if they could possibly avoid it. And when James II once more claimed the power of the sword for religious bigotry, the fact that his schemes made shipwreck is less remarkable than the mode and manner of the Revolution which disposed of him and of Stuart absolutism for ever. For in England (as distinct from Scotland and Ireland) that Revolution was accomplished virtually without bloodshed, and the Settlement to which it led 'was not the triumph of a party, but an agreement of the two chief parties to live and let live'.¹

The constitution which emerged from the Revolution Settlement is often described as an Oligarchy. It certainly concentrated power in the hands of a wealthy landowning aristocracy. But it was precisely during the period when this class enjoyed unchallenged

¹ G. M. Trevelyan, *The English Revolution, 1688-1689* (1938), pp. 173-174.

supremacy that the foundations on which modern English Democracy was to be built were made immovably secure. Resounding successes, won at the expense of the despotic monarchy of France, showed, for the first time in the history of the world, that a parliamentary monarchy could be efficient. The control of government by the discussions of an elected assembly—a thing which in the previous century had seemed to lead straight to anarchy—was now vindicated as a means to political stability, to naval and commercial leadership, and to the acquisition of a vast Empire. By such dazzling and yet solid achievements 'England proved to Europe the success of a gigantic constitutional experiment'.¹ The conventional usages of the constitution were modified quietly and steadily; and the development of the cabinet and the party system in particular provided essential prerequisites to the subsequent growth of Democracy. But even more important were the more general and intangible developments of the period—the acceptance of government by discussion as something which Englishmen of all classes and opinions regarded as a precious heritage, and the recognition that the English Parliament was a sovereign body whose competence to legislate on any and every matter could no longer be

¹ C. Grant Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians* (1911), p. 163. Professor Trevelyan says: 'It was the function of this old England, first of all great nations, to show that efficiency could be combined with freedom': *The Two-Party System in English Political History* (Romanes Lecture, 1926), p. 10.

challenged in the name of any doctrine of 'fundamental law'. The change of sentiment in regard to this latter point needs emphasis. The constitutional struggles which ended in the Settlement of 1689 had been not so much a contest between rival claimants to sovereignty as a contest between rival views about the content of fundamental laws which it was considered that no authority was competent to alter. If such doctrines of fundamental law had retained their hold upon the minds of Englishmen, it is hard to see how the constitution could have been democratized by legislation in the nineteenth century; and it is therefore of the first importance that they were gradually and insensibly abandoned, so that by the middle of the eighteenth century 'the dogma of Parliamentary sovereignty was proclaimed in a manner scarcely conceivable two generations earlier'.¹

Many factors contributed to the firm establishment of government by discussion in the eighteenth century, and some of the worst abuses of the age were among those which did so. Discussion was tempered by bribery. It was eased by the fact that Dissenters, though not debarred (as Roman Catholics were) by the Test Act of 1678, could not readily get elected to the House of Commons. Social forces, and the need of support from patrons and electors who belonged to the established church, could be counted on to exclude those of

¹ Mark A. Thomson, *A Constitutional History of England, 1642 to 1801* (1938), p. 395.

fanatical and uncompromising temper and to admit only the more pliant, while for the most part non-conformist interests were represented by aristocratic Whigs who were not themselves Dissenters. Thus various opinions were represented, but the range of variety was small; and hence discussion was neither put to sleep by uniformity nor drowned by the stormy surges of irreconcilable hatreds. In general the political temperature was much lower than it had been under the Stuarts. 'Enthusiasm' was out of favour; and 'moderate men looked big'. The ardours of the Methodists, unlike the zeal of the seventeenth-century Puritans, tended to divert men's minds from politics; and the splendid rewards to be won by devotion to business in that age of commercial expansion were another strong counter-attraction. Owing to the restricted franchise, the property qualification for members of parliament, and the corruptions of the electoral system, the interests of the dominant class were as safe in the hands of the House of Commons as in those of the House of Lords; and the increasing predominance of the elected chamber was therefore accepted without foreboding. And just because Parliament could be trusted not to do anything dangerous, and was always ready to help the aristocracy to attain their ends—for example, by the enclosure acts—confidence in Parliament increased and the belief that it had the right to do anything it pleased became established.

To a democratic generation, uniquely sensitive to the claims of social justice, the Oligarchy of eighteenth-century England appears in an odious light for its cynical indifference to the sufferings of the poor and its neglect of what seems to us one of the primary duties of government. But the truth of this indictment must not deceive us into supposing that the masses of the people desired, or could then have operated, a democratic constitution.¹ And those who have witnessed the collapse of the League of Nations should be able to understand how much modern English Democracy owes to the fact that the English Parliament, after its victory over the Stuart Monarchy, was granted a long period of comparative quiescence, in which the principles of parliamentary government were able to take firm root, and was not called to the performance of tasks involving a serious strain upon the loyalties which sustained it, until those loyalties had become an inveterate national habit.

¹ 'No critic', writes Philip Anthony Brown, 'could pretend that the unrepresented chafed under their exclusion': *The French Revolution in English History* (1918), p. 8; cp. Mark A. Thomson, *op. cit.* pp. 468-469; G. S. Veitch, *The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform* (1913), p. 20.

CHAPTER IV

THE GROWTH OF ENGLISH DEMOCRACY

No one to-day can read much about England in the reign of George III without being astonished at the admiration then felt for the English Constitution. Judged by any modern standard, the system of government before which Blackstone and Burke and Paley bowed in reverent awe, must be accounted a preposterous sham. The distribution of parliamentary constituencies throughout the country bore no relation either to population or to economic geography. The electors were a ludicrously small minority of the people; and it could not even be pleaded that the franchise was reserved on principle to the rich or the educated, for in the counties the small freeholder had a vote as well as the great landlord, and in the boroughs the electorate was determined by local customs which were as various as they were illogical and occasionally gave the franchise to men who were poor and illiterate while denying it to the local banker and solicitor. Moreover, the whole system was infected with gross corruption. Some boroughs were regarded as the property of wealthy individuals, who would nominate the member much as the patron of a living presents a parson to a benefice. In almost all boroughs where the electors were few, bribery and patronage directed

their votes; and even in a county constituency a contested election might be in fact a financial contest between two county magnates. Seats as well as votes were bought and sold. And when the representatives of the people were once chosen, a great fund of official posts—mostly sinecures—was available to enable the government of the day to purchase their support.¹

Yet respect for this strange 'museum of constitutional archaeology' was general. Those who wished for change were, with negligible exceptions, loyal to its fundamental principles: their hope was to modify, not to destroy, the system. The King certainly tried to alter the balance of the constitution by increasing the royal power, but he 'never attacked the sovereignty and supremacy of parliament', and, so far from challenging the settlement of 1688, was really seeking to recover a control of governmental policy, such as William III had enjoyed.² The various Revolution Societies, again—like the 'Revolution Club' of Leicester which in 1788 resolved 'that this town is improperly represented in Parliament', or the 'Revolution Society of London' which in the following year sent its congratulations to the National Assembly of revolutionary France—took their names, not from any revolution present or to come, but from the Revolution of 1688, whose glories it was their wont to cele-

¹ Detailed accounts will be found in Élie Halévy, *A History of the English People in 1815* (English Translation, 1924), pp. 96-130, and in Veitch, *op. cit.* chap. 1.

² G. B. Adams, *Constitutional History of England* (1921), p. 400.

brate each year, in very English fashion, by a public dinner.¹ The fact is of course that the English system worked better than could be guessed from the scandalous chronicle of its defects. Upon its 'sordid foundations' there 'was built a government whose strength and stability won the admiration and envy of Europe'.² In spite of corruption, statesmen of great public spirit and splendid abilities did get elected to the House of Commons. By means of a press which was freer than that of any continental country, by public meetings and petitions, by demonstrations at election time, and sometimes by rioting, members of parliament were made aware of popular sentiment, so that 'any great wave of feeling or opinion was sure to reach the house and to produce effects there'.³ Most important for the future was the assured competence of Parliament to effect constitutional changes by statute, while the very

¹ Veitch, *op. cit.* pp. 104, 121-122.

² C. P. Ilbert, *Parliament* (revised edition), p. 46.

³ *Ibid.* p. 42. For the means by which public opinion found expression see Halévy, *op. cit.* pp. 130-149. The growth of newspaper reading is indicated by the figures for the stamp duty which was paid on 7,411,757 copies in 1753, on over 15 million copies in 1792 and on nearly 25 million copies in 1821. As regards freedom of speech and political association, it would be unfair to judge of normal conditions from the war-induced panic of what H. W. C. Davis calls 'Pitt's reign of terror' (*The Age of Grey and Peel* (1929), p. 71). Even in this period, disgust with Braxfield's conduct of the Scottish trials and the savage sentences he inflicted must not make us forget the rebuff to the government involved in the acquittal of Hardy, Horne Tooke and Thelwall in 1794 or the considerable amount of political agitation which did in fact go on in spite of the war.

anomalies and illogicalities of the old system afforded critics with an unanswerable case for reform, and in a few boroughs provided a precedent for household, or even for something like manhood suffrage.¹

There was no real movement for parliamentary reform in the eighteenth century until about 1780. By that time, however, the King's control of patronage had made the Whigs critical of a system which satisfied them when it was the buttress of their own power, while the American War of Independence stimulated thought about the nature of representative government and set men asking why the conduct of the war was so inefficient. Yet apart from 'economical reform', directed to the suppression of sinecures and other instruments of royal patronage, no notable change was made for half a century. The French Revolution, though at first it increased the hopes of the reformers, had destroyed all possibility of their fulfilment by producing an anti-Jacobin panic, while the long war with France absorbed the energies of statesmen and meant that 'anti-Jacobinism of the most unreasoning kind' was 'regarded as synonymous with patriotism'.² Even so, the movement for reform never wholly died out; and the English quality of steady persistence showed itself in this as well as in the desperate struggle against Napoleon. Year by year,

¹ Halévy, *op. cit.* p. 113.

² G. M. Trevelyan, *British History in the Nineteenth Century* (1922), p. 69.

too, industrial change and the shift of population made the anomalies of the old system more glaring; nor was it only the comparative sobriety of the July Revolution of 1830 which enabled the English to see an example rather than a warning in the France of Louis Philippe.

The Whigs who carried the Reform Bill of 1832 only believed in moderate reform and hoped by means of it to preserve the essential features of the old aristocratic order. But the Bill was more drastic than was expected; it was enthusiastically supported by radical opinion, now strong and militant among the middle classes and the wage-earners; and this popular movement secured the defeat of the Tory opposition. Since the new franchise was far from being democratic, the hopes of the working classes were soon quenched in disappointment and in a few years the Chartists were pressing for further change. Yet it would be anachronistic to regard the Great Reform Bill as a timid measure. There is reason to think that nothing more democratic could at that time have been forced through Parliament.¹ And, after all, the rotten boroughs were abolished; a number of the great industrial towns were given the right to send representatives to Westminster; and, narrow as it seems to modern eyes, the franchise thus established by peaceful legislation was far wider than that which had recently been won for the French

¹ In the same House of Commons which passed the Reform Bill by a majority of 136, an amendment in favour of household suffrage received only one vote: G. M. Trevelyan, *Lord Grey of the Reform Bill* (1920), p. 269.

by Revolution.¹ Moreover, the defects and illogicalities of the new system were a guarantee of future progress, for many of the middle class remained, like the wage-earners, unenfranchised, and sooner or later the right to vote was bound to be claimed by both in a combination of irresistible strength.² If anybody was 'dished' over the first Reform Bill it was the conservative Whigs, who, like Grey himself, wanted a definitive settlement 'on which we can stand', and certainly not that astute 'old firebrand' Francis Place, who considered that 'as a commencement' the measure of 1832 was 'invaluable'.³

The prognostications of Place were fulfilled both by the failure of Chartism, which was essentially a working-class movement, and by the successful combination of the wage-earners and the middle-class

¹ In France the franchise set up by the Revolution of 1830 meant that the electors were about one in 200 of the population. In the United Kingdom under the Reform Act about one in 30 had a vote. See Halévy, *A History of the English People 1830-1841* (English translation, 1927), p. 28, note 5; cp. A. L. Lowell, *The Government of England* (1908), vol. 1, p. 205.

² Trevelyan, *British History*, p. 240.

³ Davis, *op. cit.* p. 229; E. L. Woodward, *The Age of Reform* (1939), pp. 76, 78; Graham Wallas, *Life of Francis Place* (revised edition, 1918), pp. 326, 328. Professor Trevelyan says: 'It was from 1832 onwards that the whole spirit of our polity finally diverges from that of aristocratic Germany, just as in 1793 it had diverged from that of Jacobin France': he adds that 'there was much greater danger under Pitt and Castlereagh of Britain becoming like aristocratic Germany than there ever had been of her becoming like the France of Robespierre': *Lord Grey of the Reform Bill*, p. 351.

radicals which led to the Reform Bill of 1867.¹ It is a noteworthy sign of changing opinion that this Bill was introduced by a Tory government; but the real impetus came from the popular agitation, and its force compelled Disraeli to accept amendments which made the measure more democratic than he had intended it to be. The electorate was nearly doubled. The workmen of the towns received the franchise. The distribution of seats was brought into somewhat closer relation to the distribution of population. But just as part of the middle class had been left voteless in 1832, so now the household and lodger franchise was not applied to the county constituencies; and the votelessness of the agricultural labourers and many of the miners provided an argument for further change. The change came in 1884, when the franchise was extended to the workmen of the villages and some two million voters were added to the electorate of the United Kingdom. Introduced by the Liberal government of Gladstone, the Bill which provided for these developments was resisted by the House of Lords until agreement had been reached on the Bill for the redistribution of seats which followed it. Yet the attitude of the Conservative leaders in this matter illustrates the general infiltration of democratic ideas, for the new scheme involved a much closer approximation to equality of electoral districts and was thus unmistakably based on the principle that representation means the counting of

¹ Wallas, *op. cit.* p. 266; Trevelyan, *British History*, p. 345.

heads and not the weighing of 'interests'. As a result of this legislation, something not far removed from manhood suffrage was established. But women were still without the vote; it was still possible for one man to have several votes (by qualifying in several constituencies); and the household franchise meant in practice that a workman who married young became an elector at twenty-one while his more prudent brother who abstained from matrimony until he had saved a little money had to wait for his vote as well as for his wife. It is highly significant that the alteration of these matters was accomplished without serious controversy by the Acts of 1918 and 1928, though before the war of 1914-1918 they had been the subject of much dispute. The Act of 1918 provided also for an improved distribution of seats.¹

By the series of franchise acts, stretching from 1832 to 1928, the electorate was gradually extended to include the whole nation; and English Democracy is now based upon a virtually universal suffrage. But

¹ For further particulars of the acts affecting the franchise since 1832 see Lowell, *op. cit.* vol. 1, chap. 9, and A. B. Keith, *The Constitution of England from Queen Victoria to George VI* (1940), vol. 1, chap. 6. Plural voting has not been abolished, and the Act of 1918 actually increased the number of plural voters to a small extent, for the university franchise, previously limited to male masters of arts, was extended to women and to those who had taken the B.A. degree, and the limitation which confined the right to a second vote in respect of business premises to those residing within seven miles was removed. But no one can now give more than two votes at an election.

'Government of the People by the People' requires more than this, for universal suffrage does not by itself secure that the elected assembly will be truly representative of the electorate. And along with the democratisation of the franchise, we must note the increasing freedom of the electors to choose whom they will to represent them. In 1829 Roman Catholics were made eligible for election, while the obstacle of a Christian oath which prevented professing Jews from sitting in the House of Commons could be surmounted by individual exemptions after 1858 and was removed in 1866. Quakers, and some others who had religious objections to taking an oath, were given special exemption from 1833 onwards; and in 1888 affirmation was substituted for the oath in the case of all who objected to the oath either because they had no religious belief or because they had religious objections to being sworn. The removal of a property qualification in 1858 made it legal, and the introduction of payment of members in 1911 made it economically less difficult for a poor man to be chosen.¹ In 1918 the disqualification

¹ The property qualification had been easily evaded and it was rather election expenses (regular and irregular) which barred the election of poor men unless they were financed by wealthy patrons; but the statute of 1710 limiting the choice of electors to substantial landowners remained the letter of the law until 1838, and between that year and the abolition of the qualification in 1858 was only modified by the provision that the requisite estate (£600 a year for shire members, £300 a year for borough members) might consist of wealth other than land. See E. Porritt, *The Unreformed House of Commons* (1909), vol. 1, chap. ix. In 1937 the salary of a member of parliament was raised from £400 (the figure established in 1911) to £600.

of women was removed. Meanwhile the Ballot Act of 1870 had introduced secret voting, and bribery and 'treating' have been attacked by statutes dealing with corrupt practices. These measures have made it easier for the elector to vote as he really wants without being influenced either by fear or favour, while the Act of 1918, by providing that all elections shall be held on one day, has eliminated an irrational factor which was said to influence some electors—the desire to be on what early results indicated as the winning side. Nor must we forget that the Parliament Act of 1911 reduced the maximum duration of Parliament from seven to five years, and thus made for more frequent elections at the same time that it curbed the power of the House of Lords to resist the will of the people as expressed in the House of Commons.

Less tangible and definite, but no less important, have been developments which afford ground for increasing confidence in the democratic ideal that 'Government of the People' may approximate more and more closely to all that is implied by the term 'Government for the People'. These developments are of various kinds. We may reckon among them the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, which transferred the great mass of Irish business to the Parliaments of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State and so increased the time which the British Parliament can devote to matters in which British electors are directly interested. Then the democratisa-

tion of English local government—a process in which the Corporations Act of 1835, the establishment of County Councils in 1888, the Act of 1894 setting up District Councils and Parish Councils, and the Local Government Act of 1929, stand out as landmarks—has not only been an essential part of the growth of English Democracy in general, but has afforded a training in self-government which has been invaluable. Above all, we must remember the development of Education. It is significant that the allocation of state funds to Education followed hard upon the Reform Bill of 1832, that the great Education Act of 1870 followed the Reform Bill of 1867, and that primary education was made free to all in 1891 within a few years of the extension of the franchise by the Act of 1884. But Education is not only a matter of schools and universities, or of directly educational movements such as those represented by University Extension and Workers' Educational Association. Much has been accomplished for political education and hence for English Democracy by trade unionism, by the co-operative movement, by the cheapening of newspapers, and, more recently, by broadcasting.

The history of human institutions scarcely provides a parallel to the record of long-continued and sure-footed advance which tells of the growth of English Democracy. Every important change was preceded by preparatory discussion and controversy, and at every stage of the development ardent spirits chafed at delay.

To others each step seemed perilous; and the historian who takes account of the fears and prejudices of men is bound to admit that the democratization of England has progressed at a pace which could hardly have been exceeded without a fatal breach in national unity and the creation of a permanent body of 'irreconcilables'. Yet the breaking-point never was reached. Again and again the advocates of change were left dissatisfied and asking for more, while their opponents gasped for breath and shook their heads over the prospect of impending disaster. But no considerable group has been driven to despair of the State. The fundamental agreement which lies beneath all our differences has been maintained. In each generation public opinion exhibited the same healthy characteristics. It has almost always been sharply divided about the next step to be taken. It has generally shown dissatisfaction—for opposite reasons—about the most recent change, which in the view of some went too far and for others did not go far enough. But when has there not been general agreement that the last step but one was a step in the right direction? There has been no turning back, and no serious attempt to turn back, along the road by which the English people have advanced towards Democracy.

The same causes which prevented reactionary movements contributed to the continuance of progress. The compromise which outrages none is wholly satisfying to few, and always leaves some zealous for further

change. And the illogical, piecemeal transformation of the British Constitution, pettifogging and uninspired as it may seem in the eyes of the doctrinaire, has in fact possessed a double virtue, for, on the one hand, general acceptance has been secured for new developments by the intertwining of old loyalties with new additions to the ancient structure, and, on the other hand, the edifice has never at any stage attained the fatal symmetry which discourages progress by an appearance of perfection. It is the same to-day as in the past. The call to progress is still insistent, for anomalies and defects abound. For example, the liability of candidates for election expenses not only gives the Government undue power over the House of Commons, by linking the threat of dissolution to a prospect of financial outlay, but also limits the independence of candidates who are without large private means, by making it necessary for them to obtain assistance from the funds of their party.¹ Again, the old problem of the House of Lords remains unsolved; and though the Parliament Act of 1911—more by the fact that it was enacted than by its actual provisions—has lessened the practical importance of this problem, the rapid growth of democratic feeling makes the retention of a mainly hereditary, second chamber more than ever incongruous.² Then

¹ W. Ivor Jennings, *Parliament* (1939), p. 123; Keith, *op. cit.* vol. 1, pp. 459-460. It is significant that party discipline seems to be most strict in the Labour Party.

² For a recent and illuminating discussion of the question, see Jennings, *op. cit.* chap. XI.

real difficulties are caused by 'the extreme inaccuracy of the representation accorded to various parties in Parliament in comparison with the actual votes cast in their favour'—a defect which has led some to advocate the 'alternative vote', and some to seek a remedy in proportional representation.¹ And besides old problems to be solved, there are new dangers to be faced and some dangers which are not new but have acquired a new importance. The delegation of legislative powers to executive departments is by no means new, but the complex and technical character of modern social legislation has led to an enormous increase in the practice, and ministers 'have been increasingly empowered to make rules, orders or regulations for carrying out the intention of statutes'. But this, as Mr Keir expresses it, creates a danger 'that law comes to be laid down by an authority other than that of Parliament, and that its formulation by discussion and consent is being replaced by the arbitrary fiat of officials'.² More fundamentally inimical to Democracy is the theory and practice of so-called 'National Government'. In war a coalition of parties may well be advisable, but the principle that even in peace time a difficult situation should be met by a 'ministry of all the talents', chosen from all parties, is a frontal challenge to the democratic ideal. It is essential to Democracy that all matters of public policy should be sub-

¹ Keith, *op. cit.* pp. 292-303; cp. Keir, *op. cit.* p. 473.

² Keir, *op. cit.* pp. 512, 513; cp. Jennings, *op. cit.* chap. XIII.

jected to full and free discussion in Parliament, and that the discussion should be conducted on a high level of responsibility. This is assured by the existence of an Opposition strong enough to be a potential alternative to the Government in power, for then the criticism and defence of governmental policy are alike stimulated to vigour, and a sense of responsibility informs the Opposition because the critics know that they may be called upon to form a government. But 'National Government' means a weak Opposition, for, even if ability is not in fact concentrated upon the Government benches, an Opposition which is weak in numbers is necessarily ineffective. Its sense of responsibility is not vitalized by the prospect of office, and the Opposition leaders, being few, have so much to do both in the House and by way of speech-making in the country, that sheer fatigue and dissipation of energy deprives their criticisms of force. In addition, the elector's vote loses much of its value if a coalition of parties virtually denies him the right of choice between alternative governments.

Thus much remains to do. The maintenance and development of English Democracy will be no easy task. As in former generations it calls for thought and imagination, for caution and confidence, for patience and energy. But if the road to fuller and truer Democracy seems at times difficult to find and hard to traverse, the history of the past justifies our hopes for the future. For to survey the history of England in its

larger perspectives is to recognize, with Milton, that the English people have been 'ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty', and that, in respect of the qualities which Democracy needs, they are 'not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to'.

CHAPTER V

DEMOCRACY AND WAR

THE ways of Democracy are ways of Peace. Of all political creeds Democracy is the most closely bound up with the belief that Peace is good and War one of the worst of evils. Since it is based on trust in reason, reaches its decisions by free discussion, settles differences at the ballot box, and treats minorities with consideration, so that its citizens may, in the deepest sense of the words, 'agree to differ', Democracy necessarily implies the use of peaceful methods in domestic politics. And naturally it also requires that international relations should be regulated in the same way. If you believe that the conduct of men should be guided by reason and that their relations one with another should be settled by discussion and agreement and not by the use of force, or the threat of force, you cannot confine the application of that principle within the limit of political frontiers. But, further, Democracy needs external peace for its own internal development. War is repugnant to Democracy, because every war in which a democratic state engages is bound to be a war against Democracy, checking its growth and threatening its survival. That is so because in war 'Government for the People' cannot be 'Government by the People', and in place of the gradual and increasing

approximation of the two which comes with every advance upon the road to a fuller and truer Democracy, there is divorce between them. With the outbreak of war, 'Government for the People' becomes the dominant aim, and even that is narrowed and impoverished in content by the stern necessities of the hour, while 'Government by the People' and all its prerequisites tend to shrivel away. General elections are postponed. The differences between political parties are hushed. Commands take the place of discussion. Criticism is thrust aside by authoritarian methods. Discipline encroaches upon freedom. The young, upon whom the future development of Democracy so largely depends, instead of being trained to the use of reason by the practice of freedom, are taught to obey without question and 'not to reason why', while, because of that very adaptability which makes their freedom of choice so glorious and full of hope, they especially are deprived of freedom and reduced to the level of the old man in his decrepitude, of whom it is written 'another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not'. And these evils are necessary accompaniments of war. In war there is little time for discussion; and knowledge of the facts upon which reasonable judgment must be based has in large measure to be denied to the ordinary citizen, lest the enemy should learn what it would help him to know. In war, the less wise decision, swiftly taken, issued as an order, and obeyed without hesitation, is often preferable to

a wiser decision attained at the cost of protracted discussion.

War is loathsome to all men of good will and sound sense; but because it directly outrages the ideals of Democracy, the believer in Democracy is bound to regard war with peculiar detestation and to think peace worth almost any price. But the peace which is precious to Democracy is something more than avoidance of war. Even if outward peace is maintained, Democracy is undermined whenever international relations are so clouded with the spirit of hostility and mistrust that men feel themselves to be living on the edge of war. When relations with foreign countries are a matter of constant fear and suspicion—when peace is no true peace and the most pressing questions of politics are concerned with avoiding war or preparing for it—Democracy is put upon the defensive and even forced to retreat. Under such conditions real freedom of discussion and free criticism of policy become almost impossible. Much has to be done in secret; and even the open acts of the Government cannot be criticized effectively, for they may either be justified, or be wrongly supposed to be justified, by secret information about the intentions and preparations of foreign states, which cannot possibly be made public. Such secrecy acts upon Democracy like a corrosive acid.¹

¹ In case any of my readers should doubt my assertion that the secret information of which I speak 'cannot possibly be made public', may I illustrate my meaning by examples? The

But further, when international relations are in the unhappy condition which I have described, the road forward towards a fuller and richer Democracy is blocked; and it is of the essence of Democracy to advance. The cause of Democracy is, as we have seen, closely bound up with two things—Education and Social Reform.¹ Upon these things, above all, the advance of Democracy depends. But, like most good things, Education and Social Reform are costly. They require thought. They require labour. And neither thought nor labour can be devoted to these necessary means of democratic progress, if the thoughts of statesmen are concentrated upon urgent problems of diplomacy and national defence, and the resources of the nation in labour and wealth are absorbed by the tasks which a race in armaments imposes. For these reasons also, the peace which Democracy needs is more than avoidance of war.

It is only when the essentially pacific nature of information may be about the intentions of a possible ally in the event of war: to disclose these may be contrary to the interest of that ally (and indeed the information may have been given under a pledge of secrecy); or there may be grave danger that a disclosure would precipitate a war which there is still hope of avoiding, or at least of postponing until preparations for defence are in a more advanced state. Or, again, the information may be about the preparations of a country suspected of hostile intentions: it may have been obtained through secret service agents, and making it public might reveal the source from which it came and prevent any more information being obtained by the same means.

¹ See above, pp. 3, 7.

Democracy is clearly understood that the relation of Democracy to the present struggle can be seen in its true perspective. Between the peace-loving and peace-needing ideals of Democracy and the faith of the Nazis and Fascists there is opposition as sharp and fundamental as any which has ever divided man from man. The opposition was revealed by the first results of the new doctrines—the rise of the Dictatorships and the complete devitalization of parliamentary forms of government in the countries which the Dictators ruled. But far more serious was it that the moral prerequisites of Democracy—Freedom of Speech, Toleration, Respect for Minorities—were rejected, scorned and trampled under foot. Yet for years the Democracies of England and France, in spite of ever-growing anxiety and horror, refrained from an appeal to force. Historians in the future will debate, and perhaps decide, whether that exercise of patience was unwisely prolonged. It was criticized at the time by some who thought it a betrayal of Democracy; and to many American observers our reluctance to fight seemed as short-sighted as their reluctance has seemed to some English observers since. But though the conduct of French and English foreign policy in those fateful years may well be criticized as fumbling and ineffective, some of the critics who spoke in the name of Democracy showed a disturbing inability to appreciate the implications of the democratic faith. They seemed at times to advocate an ideological crusade against the

Fascist and Nazi states. Such a crusade would have been wholly repugnant to the principles of Democracy. Democracy is not called to interfere here, there, and everywhere to secure the adoption of democratic government. 'Government of the People by the People' means that Peoples should be left to govern themselves, not required to conform to the dictates of other Peoples, however democratic these other Peoples may be and however sincerely the spread of Democracy may be the object of their interference. To 'live and let live', not to stamp on everything you disapprove of, is the way of Democracy. On the other hand it is the duty of Democracy to do everything it can to secure its own *Lebensraum*. And there lies the crux of the problem when Democracy finds itself face to face with aggressor states. For the *Lebensraum* required by Democracy is not territorial and does not depend on far-flung frontiers or widespread spheres of influence. It is something spiritual—an atmosphere of trust and confidence and freedom, in which, and in which alone, Democracy can breathe. The world has never yet been 'safe for Democracy', but there has usually been just enough of this atmosphere for it to live and grow in strength. So long as there is, Democracy, even when gasping for breath, must cling to the methods of reason and negotiation. It must do so because the outbreak of war is itself a defeat for Democracy. But the situation may become such that methods of reason and negotiation are no longer possible. They are not possible when

the whole atmosphere of international relations is filled with the poison-gas of lawlessness, aggression and bad faith. You cannot debate in gas-masks. And so, just because the peace which Democracy needs is more than mere avoidance of war, the principles of Democracy may, in the last resort, require a democratic People, though 'knowing war damnable', to take up arms against those enemies of peace whose ways are ways of war even when they talk of peace and pretend to seek it. At what precise date that point was reached in the history of Nazi and Fascist aggression may be disputed. But there is no reason for any believer in Democracy to regret that England and France by their forbearance made their 'will to peace' clear beyond the possibility of mistake. And whether the actual *casus belli* was well or ill-chosen, there can be no doubt now that the aggressor states are striking at the very foundations of Democracy and that armed resistance is necessary to its preservation.¹

¹ Lest I should appear to be shirking the controversial questions relating to English foreign policy in the years preceding the war, I should like to explain that I have avoided the discussion of these matters for two reasons. First, a discussion of these questions would have obscured the essential facts as I see them: viz. that democratic principles forbid an 'ideological crusade' against undemocratic states as such, required a patient effort to avoid war, and eventually necessitated a resort to arms. The questions whether a bolder foreign policy would have been wiser, and whether we should have abandoned the methods of negotiation at an earlier date, do not seem to me to affect these main points. Secondly, I do not think the ordinary citizen is as yet in possession of information on which a sound judg-

The dread paradox has come true. War, which is the negation of all that Democracy stands for, has become the unavoidable means of preserving it—the only method by which the road forward to a fuller and truer Democracy can be re-opened. But the preservation of Democracy is not merely a matter of fighting the aggressor. Democracy must be cherished and defended at home. And that need too sets us a hard task, which calls for wisdom and watchfulness as well as for resolution. The spirit of war is so alien to Democracy that the need for efficiency in war can only too easily make us forgetful of the ideals for which we are fighting. When war comes much which is essential to the normal life of Democracy simply has to be put aside for the time being. Like the treasures of the National Gallery and the British Museum, some of our liberties have to be removed to a place of safety during war. To resist their removal would be to risk their total loss. The

ment upon the controverted points must be based. The future historian will need to know (i) what the French Government said to the English Government on each of the problems which arose, (ii) what was reported to the English Government by ambassadors and others about the intentions and preparations of all the countries involved and about the divisions of opinion in France, and (iii) what was the state of our own defences at different dates. In judging whether the policy followed was or was not democratic, the historian will not confuse the spirit of democracy with a spirit of knight errantry which would appeal to force without either measuring the force at its disposal or considering whether or no the will of the People was prepared to endorse the appeal.

cause of Democracy will not be furthered by faddy or doctrinaire objections to this and to that. None the less we must see to it that fundamental liberties are not sacrificed, that nothing is given up without due cause, that it is really to a place of safety that the treasures are removed. The free institutions which are the outward shell of our Democracy must be kept in being. The spirit of Democracy must be kept alive in our hearts. Above all, the minds and characters of the young must be educated, so that they may be strong and sufficient, not merely to grasp, but to carry forward the torch of our democratic traditions and especially that tradition of steady, continuing and orderly progress towards fuller and richer democracy, which is the peculiar glory of the English-speaking peoples.

In spite of war, we must hold fast to our faith in Democracy. And while we defend the threatened foundations of Democracy at home, we must not allow the heat and smoke of battle to obscure the war-aims for the sake of which we engaged in the struggle. The principles of Democracy impelled us to fight, because Democracy is not a hoarded treasure which can be enjoyed in a warring world behind a Maginot Line—or an Atlantic Ocean—of isolationism. And the war-aim of Democracy is therefore a peace-aim—to win that peace which is more than avoidance of war. As yet it is impossible to discern, even in outline, the concrete terms of settlement which we should endeavour to secure. But that makes it all the more

necessary that the essential requirements of Democracy should be constantly before our minds in order that its principles may be applied to the problems of settlement when they do at last emerge in concrete shape as practical issues. The essential requirements are clear. Stern treatment of wrongdoers is not forbidden. But all men—German as well as Jew and Italian as well as Communist—must be treated as human beings, as members of the race to which we all belong. The faith of Democracy is a faith in Humanity. We should be abandoning that faith if we accepted the Nazi doctrine of a *Herren-Volk* set over against sub-human peoples and merely changed its emphasis by acting as if we were the *Herren-Volk* and our enemies sub-human. We cannot win the Peace which Democracy needs by making a desert and calling it peace. If the world is ever to be, in President Wilson's words, 'safe for Democracy', it must become what his successor has described as 'a world of neighbours'. Unless we believe that that is possible, and are prepared to show forth our faith by treating all men as potential neighbours, our hope is vain.

CHAPTER VI

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

THE future of Democracy depends upon Education. More than any other social ideal or system of government, Democracy requires an educated people; and the quality of Democracy to which any people can attain, though partly determined by natural aptitude, by economic conditions, and by habits of mind derived from the subtle influence of historic tradition, is to a great extent commensurate with the quality of their Education. Of course every modern state, whether it is democratic or not, needs a large number of well-instructed citizens; and the importance of schooling is fully recognized by those whose ideals are most sharply opposed to the ideals of Democracy. Totalitarianism draws much of its vitality from 'youth movements'; and many pages of *Mein Kampf* are devoted to the training of the young. But 'instruction' and 'training' are not the same thing as education, and though both must obviously be included in a sound educational system, much more than this is implied by the statement that Democracy requires an educated people.

It is the great glory of Democracy that in a democratic society the best citizen is not the instructed

instrument of the State's purpose, nor even the enthusiastic devotee of democratic 'ideology', but the man in whom the capacities which distinguish men from brutes are developed to the fullest possible extent. The education needed in a developed Democracy is that which makes the most of men as men. It is when the People are 'well-educated' in this sense that 'Government by the People' is also 'Government for the People'. And the reason for this is to be found in the very nature of the democratic ideal.

A belief that government should be based on free discussion, and that after discussion decisions should be reached by the counting of votes, is the first and simplest article of the democratic creed. But the implications of this doctrine are far-reaching. It implies that reason and not passion is the light which should illumine the pathways of human advance towards social well-being. It implies that men are in fact sufficiently reasonable and sufficiently sociable to settle the affairs of great states by these peaceful, reasonable, 'parliamentary' methods. Thus the doctrine depends fundamentally upon faith in human reason and upon faith in the ordinary man as a reasonable being. Yet this idealism is tempered by a sober realism. We acknowledge the fallibility of our reasoning powers when we affirm the necessity of discussion and assume that differences of opinion will remain at the end of it. And so, while the idealism of Democracy reaches out towards the furthest horizons of human hope, its

realism recognizes that we have no means of attaining an infallible answer to our questions and that at best the lamp of reason guides us by fitful beams in a world of uncertainties. There is a profound difference between the modest realism of the democrat's trust in reason and the fantastic arrogance of the totalitarian conception of truth as something revealed once and for all in the glare of a Führer's wisdom and apprehended with such certainty and completeness that opinions contrary to the dictated orthodoxy deserve only to be suppressed. And because the democratic faith is of this nature—because Democracy trusts in reason as the best guide available, and at the same time is fully aware of its imperfections—the strengthening of men's reasoning powers by Education is an indispensable foundation stone of democratic policy. Moreover, toleration and respect for minorities are essential elements in Democracy. Discussion and freedom of speech depend upon our willingness to hear all sides of every question, and the loyal acceptance of majority decisions is only possible if majorities treat minorities with consideration so that people really can 'agree to differ'. Yet the history of the past, and the present state of half the world, show that toleration and respect for minorities are conquests of civilization which are hard to win and easy to lose. And the only sure means for the preservation and extension of these things is the education which develops a man's capacity for understanding other men's point of view. To the education

of reason which helps men to distinguish truth from error, there must be added the education of understanding which enables us to appreciate with sympathetic discernment how it is that people come to hold erroneous opinions, and perhaps reveals in their errors some element of truth. Such a faculty of understanding is peculiarly susceptible of improvement by education, and though its intensity depends largely upon inborn powers of sympathy and an inborn sense of humour, the range of its comprehension is one of the surest marks of an educated mind. But this faculty of understanding other men's point of view is as distinctively human as it is humane, while reason is the capacity which of all things most obviously distinguishes men from brutes. And since the development of these two powers is thus essential to the growth of Democracy, we are justified in asserting that the education upon which the future of Democracy depends is the education which makes the most of men as men. Every step forward in such education is an advance upon the road to a fuller and truer Democracy, for it is a means whereby men can grow in knowledge of the things which belong to social welfare, and therefore a means for enabling 'Government by the People' to operate more fully as 'Government for the People'. At the same time, a humane and liberal education of this kind is more than a means, for improvement in the quality of human life and development of all that elevates man above the beasts must be reckoned as the end which

Democracy strives to attain. That is what 'Government for the People' really means.

The contrast between Democracy and Totalitarianism is sharply reflected in the educational ideals associated with the two faiths. In place of the education of reason which leads to diversity of opinion, and in place of the education of sympathetic understanding which promotes toleration and creates a sense of unity underlying all differences, Totalitarianism puts the inculcation of orthodox faith, the stimulation of mass emotion, and the development of a sense of unity which is based on intolerance and intensified by common hatred of some chosen foe—the Jews, or the Marxists, or the 'Capitalist Democracies'. It would be unjust to pretend that this is an adequate description of totalitarian education, for some things are common to the best and worst of educational gospels, and the democrat must endorse some of the more obvious commonplaces which Hitler repeats in *Mein Kampf*—for example, the danger of over-specialization, the importance of the 'educational ladder' as a means of making careers 'open to talent', the need for physical health, and the need for an education of character which develops self-reliance, public spirit, and unselfishness. But the differences are fundamental. In addition to the points of divergence already mentioned, there is a significant difference in the balance of emphasis. Throughout the treatment of education in *Mein Kampf* an anti-intellectual bias is apparent, and physical training is given

first place. The State, the Führer tells us, must base its whole educational work, not on the imparting of mere knowledge, but in the first place on the training of healthy bodies. The cultivation of mental faculties (*der geistigen Fähigkeiten*) comes second, and even here the development of character—especially strength of will, resolution, and readiness to accept responsibilities—has foremost place, while ‘scientific’ education (*die wissenschaftliche Schulung*) is last in importance.¹ In the education of girls, the chief stress must be laid upon physical training (*die körperliche Ausbildung*), and only after that upon ‘psychical’ values, while those which are intellectual rank last of all.² In general, Hitler declares that it is only in the second place that *der völkische Staat* should promote the training of character.³

It is easy to think better of totalitarian education than it deserves, for some of its more prominent manifestations are undoubtedly attractive. We all admire healthy and adventurous youth, and the motto *Kraft durch Freude* has a jolly open-air sound. But the more one considers the general character of the totalitarian attitude to education, and in particular the balance of emphasis in the Nazi scheme of values, the clearer it becomes that the opposition between these things and the democratic ideal is a matter, not of detail only, but

¹ *Mein Kampf* (edition of 1934), p. 452 (translation by James Murphy, 1939, p. 342).

² *Ibid.* pp. 459–460 (translation, p. 347).

³ *Ibid.* p. 460 (translation, p. 347).

of fundamental principles. Democratic education seeks to make the most of men as men, while the Nazi system aims at making men into the servants of the National Socialist 'Idea' of racial superiority. In the democratic ideal, emphasis is laid upon the development of those capacities which distinguish men from brutes, while, in the Nazi ideal, attention is concentrated, to a startling degree, upon the elements which are common to man and the other animals. Physical education is to have a predominant place in the curriculum. But the bias goes further than that. *Kraft durch Freude* treats joy (which is a state of mind) as a means to bodily strength, instead of as one of the ends to which physical health and strength are themselves a means. And though one can well understand the boyish ardour with which the Hitler Youth chant their favourite slogan: 'Swift as a greyhound, tough as leather, hard as Krupp's steel', one must remember that this phrase was not invented by boys, but was coined for them by men who know how to turn boys into storm-troopers. If the terms of the slogan are taken seriously—as it is certainly intended they should be—is it not significant that they include no reference to any distinctively human quality such as intelligence, or generosity, or truthfulness, or kindness, but are concerned only with the body? Even as an ideal of physical excellence we have here something curiously one-sided, something warped in the direction of what is merely brutish. Those bodily qualities which the

human spirit has informed with its own nature and raised beyond mere animal capacity—the skill of hand and eye which belongs to fine craftsmanship, for example, or the skill of hand and ear developed by the violinist—are utterly ignored, while the attributes set before the young as the prime objects of their striving are not only attributes of man's animal nature but attributes in which the most athletic of men will inevitably be surpassed by many other creatures. We must not forget of course that the education of character plays a large part in Hitler's scheme. It takes second place, but it is unquestionably regarded as important. Yet here too a similar bias can be discerned. No doubt courage in men, even when most instinctive and unreflective, has a moral quality which distinguishes it from the blind courage of a beast, and the same may be said of all human mass movements however much they are inspired by the 'fanatical and even hysterical passions' to which Hitler traces the greatest changes in history, but it is none the less significant that the virtues upon which the ideology of National Socialism lays most stress, and to which its programme of moral education is most definitely directed, seem to be just those for which it is particularly easy to find an analogue in the instinctive impulses of the lower animals. An angry bull does not lack 'resolution'. Unstinted devotion to a common purpose is not wanting among the termites. There are no nonconformists in a pack of wolves.

From the tendencies of totalitarian education much can be learnt by way of contrast about the education needed in a Democracy. But the consideration of these things also provides a much needed warning. For Education is one of the threatened foundations of Democracy, and it is threatened not only by the outward assaults of the enemy and by the difficulty of maintaining the efficiency of the teaching service in the face of problems arising from evacuation, from the calling up of younger schoolmasters for military service, and from the shortening of university courses, but also by the insidious attraction of totalitarian ideals. Totalitarianism is in part an outcome of two movements whose influence can be recognized far beyond the frontiers of the totalitarian states. One is a movement of impatience, which rebels against the complexity of modern problems and shows itself in a tendency to favour 'short-cuts'. The other is the anti-intellectualism which is characteristic of the present age and is perhaps a result of the discovery that men are not governed by reason to the extent that the optimists of the nineteenth century believed, but are more under the influence of sub-conscious instincts and far more liable to be swayed by quasi-hypnotic suggestion than was formerly supposed. These two movements are the enemies both of Democracy and of the education which belongs to Democracy. Patience is the characteristic virtue alike of the democrat and of the teacher, and short-cuts are as dangerous to Education as they

are to Democracy; while Democracy, as we have seen, is based upon a trust in reason, and democratic education is primarily an education of man's reasoning powers, which in fact modern psychology has shown to be more in need of strengthening than has hitherto been recognized.

The threat is real. Even in England there is a danger of our confusing education and propaganda, and of forgetting that the object of education is to open the doors and windows of human capacity in all directions and not to lead people down narrow paths to predetermined goals of orthodox opinion. Only the other day—if a personal experience may be quoted—it was my lot to hear an address on educational problems. The speaker told us about the education of Nazi Germany. Its great feature was that every branch of educational activity was informed by a common spirit and directed to a single object. Not merely in the teaching of history, but even in the teaching of mathematics and science, this object was kept in view. And the object was to make the pupil into a 'good Nazi'. But then the speaker went on to remind his audience that it is wise to learn from the enemy, and that in fact what was most needed in this country was that *our* whole educational system from the elementary school to the university should be inspired by a common spirit and directed to a single object, only *our* object should be—what he was glad to say it already was in some of our great public schools—to produce, not

'good Nazis' but 'Christian gentlemen'. As Jewish refugees appeared to be numerous in the audience, it may be presumed that more than one member of it found this conclusion shocking; but can we be sure that everyone who rejects such a doctrine does so because it offends against the nature of Education, and would be equally shocked if the lecturer had said, not 'Christian gentlemen', but 'good socialists', or 'good communists', or 'sound democrats'?

But it is on another side that the totalitarian infection seems most threatening. Distrust of intellectualism and undue exaltation of games and athletics have long been notorious defects in the prevailing attitude to education in this country; and in recent years these old-fashioned prejudices have been reinforced from two directions. In the first place fear of 'black-coated unemployment' has given a delusive appearance of economic practicality to the sentiments of those who bewail the supposed tendency of literary education to turn the children of artisans into 'little clerks'—though in fact such a tendency is no necessary outcome of a literary education, but is a legacy from days when bookish attainments were exceptional and things learnt in school were liable to be regarded as valueless unless they could be used in earning one's living. Secondly, the anti-intellectual bias has been increased by the advocacy of romantic and somewhat cloudy theories which actually claim that we pay too much attention to the mind in our schools and have neglected

the body. It is disquieting to find these views eloquently supported by the Director of the Department of Education at Oxford, who maintains that 'the immense improvement in the morale of the average German youth is probably due in large measure to the steps taken under the present régime to educate their bodies', and who comes very near to suggesting that physical education should hold a predominant place.¹ Many and various objections could be urged against this type of educational theory. Its advocates seem blind to the outstanding physical healthiness of the modern Englishman, and are inclined to forget that if some forms of bodily skill, such as horsemanship, are now comparatively rare, many new forms have taken their place, so that on the whole the average English youth is probably proficient in more physical accomplishments to-day than in any previous generation.²

¹ M. L. Jacks, *Physical Education* (1938), p. 29. Mr Jacks speaks of physical education as being nothing less than 'the education of the whole personality' (p. 28) and quotes with approval a statement (made by G. W. Hedley and G. W. Murray in *Physical Education for Boys*) that 'the term "physical education" covers the whole of the processes which are directed to fostering the well-being of the growing boy' (pp. 51-52).

² Cycling and lawn-tennis are obvious examples; and if the passing of bows and arrows is deplored, what about 'darts'? Even on common ground we beat our ancestors hollow. Nearly every young person can swim nowadays; but in Queen Elizabeth's time a Cambridge don could write about swimming as if it were an almost unknown accomplishment, and in her father's reign we find Thomas Elyot referring to it as an exercise which 'hath nat bene of long tyme moche used', but which he regarded as 'right profitable in extreme daunger of warres' even

Again the 'body', of which we are told so much, seems to be rather vaguely conceived, and arguments which start with the premiss that man has a body as well as a mind, are rather liable to end with conclusions which relate only to the trunk or the larger muscles, and in which no cognizance appears to be taken of such facts as the subtle control over the muscles of the hand involved in mere ability to write. Similarly there seems occasionally to be confusion between the education of the body and the education of the mind about the body. And not least unwarrantable is the tendency to assume that the place of physical education in the school curriculum should be proportionate to the importance of the body in life. For that is really to beg two questions. First, why should we suppose that the different elements or parts of the 'whole man' have either a uniform need for education or one which varies with their importance or indispensability, and forget that some important bodily arts, like walking and washing, are soon acquired to such a degree of perfection that there is neither need nor opportunity to go on learning to do them better, as there is with things of the mind? And, secondly, why should we suppose that the relative importance of different branches of education in the school or the university must be the same which belongs to them in education as a whole, when we know

though 'there semeth to be some perile in the lernynge therof' (Everard Digby, *De Arte Natandi*, 1587; Elyot, *The Governour*, ed. H. H. Stephen Croft, 1880, vol. 1, p. 176).

that much education goes on in the home and in the outside contacts of everyday life and, in particular, that the most decisive steps in the education of the body are taken in infancy before what we ordinarily mean by the education of the mind has begun at all?

Because education is not only a matter of schools and colleges, organized teaching has, as it were, to fill up the gaps in the education of ordinary life, and to counteract its somewhat haphazard one-sidedness. Since 'the world is too much with us', it is one of the functions of the school and the university to correct the bias of the world, so that we may not 'lay waste our powers'. This is perhaps the main justification for the 'bookishness' of scholastic education; and it is this which makes it irrelevant to argue that the part assigned to physical education in the school curriculum should correspond to the importance of a sound physical development in life. But such considerations have an important bearing on many other concrete problems of democratic education. For example, since the economic basis of modern democratic society is an industrial system in which division of labour is highly developed, and this specialization narrows the experience of the individual, so that, as Professor Macgregor says, 'the meaning of the whole process is not plain to the worker', such general understanding of economic questions as the citizen of a democratic state requires can only be attained by schooling in the

elements of economic science.¹ Again, the power of modern 'propaganda', increased by the compressed reporting of parliamentary debates in the crowded modern newspaper and by the general hustle of modern life which tempts tired men to forgo the effort of hearing both sides, constitutes an obvious danger to Democracy, for the healthy competition of rival appeals tends to be replaced by the concentrated impact of quasi-hypnotic suggestion. Clearly the best safeguard against this danger is to be found in definite education of the critical faculty. If education cannot render people actually 'immune to propaganda' (as Bertrand Russell puts it), the man whose critical faculty is developed is saved from subservience to mere suggestion by his distrust of exaggeration, by his knowledge that there is probably 'another side to the question', and by his educated sense of the difference between matters of knowledge and matters of opinion and of the difference between the expert and the quack. At first sight it may appear utopian to expect any general diffusion of such a spirit of criticism, but in fact the ordinary reasonableness of quite

¹ D. H. Macgregor, *The Evolution of Industry*, p. 24. In the economy of the old world, the everyday experience of the peasant made it clear to him that increased effort brought increased wealth, and that increased corn production might be bought too dearly if it meant the neglect of his sheep. The specialization of experience has obscured such economic simplicities. Hence the fallacy of 'Ca' canny' among wage-earners and the fallacy of protectionism among employers.

ordinary people provides a foundation on which much can be built. An old Oxfordshire rustic (whose only 'education' was that provided some sixty years ago by a little village school) after listening to one of Hitler's speeches on the 'wireless' (without of course understanding a word of the language) was able to make the comment: 'He sounded to me like a hysterical woman screaming.'

It is not only the bias of the world which schools and universities must seek to correct. We must also guard against defects which are due to specialization in teaching itself. Specialization in the study of exact sciences is liable to weaken the 'political sense' which is so necessary to democracy. 'One of the most important parts of education', says Bertrand Russell, 'and one of the most neglected, is that which teaches how to reach true conclusions on insufficient data'.¹ It is here that scientists and mathematicians tend to lose their way, for reasoning in the political and social spheres is almost wholly a matter of weighing rough probabilities, and of judging, with insight which is at once critical and sympathetic, how the mixed motives of men are likely to operate in society; and misjudgment in politics is bound to result if the interaction of opinions is unconsciously regarded in the light of chemical analogies, and the stresses of politics are estimated as if they were similar to those of mechanical forces. The conclusion

¹ Bertrand Russell, *Education and the Social Order* (1932), p. 227.

would seem to be that the bias of scientific education should be corrected by the avoidance of undue specialization and by the provision of education in the 'humanities' for every citizen. That does not necessarily mean that everybody should study history or political philosophy or economics. There is no better key to the understanding of human affairs than great imaginative literature which enables us to see our fellow-men with the discerning eye of a great novelist or dramatist. Everything which spreads the love of such literature does something for the building of Democracy. But historians can also play a great part in the education which Democracy needs. It is not that history should be written with a democratic bias—far from it. What is wanted is that history, while retaining the high standard of impartiality and scientific exactness which it has at last acquired, should fully recover its former position as a widely read branch of general literature. Halévy, and Fisher, and among living historians, Professor Trevelyan, have shown us the way.

From various special problems we are brought back to the same general conclusion. The education upon which the future of Democracy depends is that which makes the most of men as men and seeks particularly to develop those capacities which distinguish men from other animals. It is difficult indeed to conceive of any development of education in this sense which is not either directly or indirectly of value to Democracy.

The education of musical taste, for example, and the acquisition of skill in singing and in playing musical instruments, unquestionably helps to sustain Democracy, for musical capacity cuts across all divisions of political opinion and social class, and the tolerance and mutual understanding which are so necessary to the maintenance of democratic methods of government and the vitality of the democratic spirit will be deepened and strengthened if those who are opponents in politics sing Bach and Handel together in the same choral society. If we seek first the Education which makes the most of men as men, all those things which belong to the training of the democratic citizen will be added unto us.

CHAPTER VII

THE TEMPLE OF MOLOCH

WHEN the modern State in the strength of its youth first threatened to become a devouring Moloch, its limitless claims were challenged in the name of religion; and religious minorities in their battle for freedom of conscience had powerful allies in the economic interests of those who found that new and dazzling opportunities of gain were open to individual enterprise, if only men were free to take advantage of them and could do what they would with their own, unhampered by legal restrictions or by such things as common-field customs, gild regulations and the prohibition of usury. The rights of conscience and the rights of property were alike defended by theories of a Social Contract; and religion and capitalism both contributed to the general acceptance of the body of ideas which we know as Individualism.

The term 'Individualism' is often used loosely as a synonym for the gospel of *Laissez-faire*. But the individualism which is presupposed by the theory of a Social Contract is something more fundamental than that famous maxim of policy. It is true of course that those who appealed to the Social Contract, either as a means of securing liberty of conscience or in defence of the rights of property, were virtually saying to the

State: 'You must let these things alone.' Yet the essential individualism of the theory lies in its assumptions that men owe little to their membership in a political community, that the State is set up by individuals to fulfil purposes already clearly conceived by them in a pre-social 'state of nature', and that the process of setting it up was a matter of bargaining with rights which they already possessed as isolated individuals in virtue of their quality as human beings.¹ From such assumptions the principle that the State should interfere as little as possible could easily be deduced; and it was a short way from the belief that the liberty of the individual is precious, to the doctrine that his unrestrained activities will necessarily promote the welfare of mankind. The extreme to which that doctrine could be pushed is shown by the very title of Bernard Mandeville's notorious book *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Publick Benefits*, which was published in 1714. But even Adam Smith, we remember, maintained that, when an individual in seeking

¹ Even Hobbes, who perversely employed the Social Contract as one of the foundations of a theory of absolute sovereignty, was an individualist in this sense. In the state of nature, as he paints it, men are already possessed of 'rights', and the establishment of civil society by the contract does not change the nature of men, but only the outward conditions of their lives. They were wild beasts (as well as lawyers!) in the state of nature, and though the sovereign, by the laws which he enacts, sets up bars to keep them from tearing one another in pieces, behind the bars they remain wild beasts still. Once the contract is torn up, 'chaos is come again'.

employment for his capital 'intends only his own gain', he is 'in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention', and that 'by pursuing his own interest, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it'.¹

The reign of individualism is over; and we are now so well aware both of its defects as a theory and of the mistakes which were made and the hardships that were suffered through its influence upon public policy and economic behaviour, that we are in danger of forgetting the great benefits conferred upon mankind by the historical movements which it sought to explain and helped to promote. Though evil things were done in the name of individual liberty, we must not think too hardly of an attitude of mind which contributed to the defeat of monarchical absolutism by the English Parliament, promoted freedom of speech and worship, and furthered economic developments the benefits of which were not limited to the few although the few gained more than a just share in their fruits.

Some appreciation of the nature and history of individualism is necessary to the understanding of our modern problems. The modern 'collectivist' outlook has been reached, partly at least, through a reaction against individualistic modes of thought and feeling. Further, the history of individualism can throw a

¹ Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, chap. 2 (ed. Cannan, vol. I, p. 421).

much-needed light upon the potentialities and dangers which belong to the dominant conceptions of our own day, for it shows how a one-sided and erroneous theory can both inspire beneficent reforms and in other directions increase the burden of human suffering.

The individualists proclaimed the supreme value of the individual and defended conscience as well as property; but they made the mistake of attributing to man apart from society thoughts and purposes and rights which he only has, and only can have, as a member of society. They failed to perceive that 'what we call an individual man is what he is because of and by virtue of community'.¹ Rousseau pointed the way to a truer conception when he declared that the passage from the state of nature into the civil state changed man from a 'stupid and limited animal' into 'an intelligent being and a man'. But Rousseau, whom Amiel described as 'an ancestor in all things', also opened the door to that monstrous development of modern Collectivism which we call Totalitarianism, for his language sometimes suggests that man attains his true end when his individuality is merged in the 'collective being' of the political community.²

Rousseau was in advance of his times; and the individualism which he undermined did not exercise its full measure of influence as a gospel of *Laissez-faire*

¹ F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (2nd edition, 1927), p. 166.

² Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, Book I, chap. 8; Book I, chap. 6; Book II, chap. 4.

until after his death. But of the later triumph of collectivism there can be no question. Manifold in the shapes it has assumed, and diverse in its consequences, collectivism has now been the predominant social faith for several generations. Like the individualism it has superseded, it has met real needs, has permeated the thoughts of men on many topics, and has promoted, and at the same time has been influenced by, changes in various spheres of life. We think of the 'Catholic' tendencies of modern religion, and, in the economic sphere, of joint-stock enterprise and trade-unionism. We think of the enormous development which has taken place in the organs and functions of the State. Good and evil alike have come of these things—on the one hand, for example, the social services; on the other, the 'neo-mercantilism' which has ringed the nations of the world with high tariff walls to the detriment of commerce and the embitterment of international relations. And as the latest manifestation of collectivism, we have in our own day seen the rise of the totalitarian States—new Temples of Moloch built on a vaster scale, and for a worship far more baneful, than those older temples of absolutism from which individualism helped men to escape.

Few political and social structures have ever been built upon such doctrinaire foundations as those erected by Hitler and Mussolini. They have their 'Ideologies' which can be traced to roots in German metaphysical theory as surely as the 'Ideology' of

communist Russia can be traced to the theories of Marx. And in so far as totalitarianism is a form of the collectivism which dominates all our minds, consideration of the theoretic turning-points which lead to these monstrous growths may serve as a warning and help us to develop our collectivism on lines which are healthy and true. For any revival of individualism in the old sense is no more to be thought of than a replacement of modern industry by the handicrafts of a machineless age.

Two fundamental errors lie at the root of the totalitarian superstition. The first, which is actually an inheritance from the old individualism, consists in thinking of social and political life as a relation between individuals and a single social whole. That whole may be thought of as the State, or as the Folk or Race. But the emphasis is always upon its unity. The fact that the social nature of man expresses itself in various groupings—families, churches, universities, trade unions, clubs and societies of all kinds—tends to be ignored. Such groups, if considered at all, are regarded either as enemies of the great Unity which should be suppressed, or as its parts and servants, destined to be mere instruments of its purposes. The second error of totalitarianism is the extreme opposite of individualism. The totalitarians have rejected the truth for which individualism stood along with the untruth which was its bane. The glory of individualism was its belief in the unique worth of the self-conscious individual, but

it was vitiated by its refusal to recognize the essentially social nature of man. The totalitarian worshippers of Moloch can see nothing but ashes in the glory. For them the individual is only a means to the good of the great Whole. Sometimes the Whole is personified and is represented as a corporate super-personality, but always the tendency is to look upon it as an end in itself—the supreme end which all else must serve. Society is not regarded as providing the *milieu* in which the good of the individual is realized and his individuality enhanced. The goal of the individual is not fulfilment but immolation. It is not service but sacrifice which Moloch demands. And as the individual consciousness is of such small account, and the state of the individual's mind and heart matters so little, it would seem to follow that sacrificing other people is as good as sacrificing oneself.

This description of totalitarian collectivism is perhaps somewhat unjust to our enemies, for men are never quite as bad as the worst of their religions. But that assumptions of this kind really lie at the root of totalitarian doctrine is a just inference from the pronouncements of the Dictators and the known character of their rule. Mussolini has definitely personified the State. He declares that 'the Fascist State is itself conscious and has itself a will and a personality'. No less definitely does he regard individuals and groups as a means to its life. 'Fascism', he writes, 'conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all

individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State.¹ The language of Hitler is less precise and more highly coloured. For him the 'State' is not an end in itself but a means to the 'conservation of the racial characteristics of mankind'.² Races are unequal; and it is a duty to further the victory of the better and stronger races and to demand the subordination of such as are lower and weaker. The *völkische Weltanschauung* does homage to the aristocratic principle of Nature—*dem aristokratischen Grundgedanken der Natur*—and believes in the validity of this law 'down to the last individual being'. Not only races, but individual men differ in value. Human *Kultur* and Civilization are inseparably connected with the Aryan race. The Aryan, however, is not at his greatest in intellectual qualities but in his readiness to put all his faculties at the service of the community: he 'willingly subordinates his own Ego to the life of the Whole (*dem Leben der Gesamtheit*) and, if the hour demands it, brings it to the sacrifice'. 'The innermost essence of every Organization depends upon this—that the individual renounces the advocacy of his personal opinions (*Meinung*) and interests, and sacrifices

¹ B. Mussolini, *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism* (1932), quoted by A. Zimmern, *Modern Political Doctrines* (1939), pp. 36, 37.

² Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (edition of 1934), p. 421, cp. p. 431 (translation by James Murphy, 1939, pp. 321, 328). This was written when Austria was still a separate state, which Hitler wished to absorb into the German *Reich*.

both for the benefit of a majority of men.' But it seems that in Hitler's view the worth of sacrifice does not depend upon its being a conscious voluntary offering. The worker or peasant who works without himself being able to attain happiness and well-being is, we are told, 'a representative of this high Idea, even if the deeper import of his activity remains always hidden from him'. Without ideal *Gesinnung*, however, the most dazzling faculties of the mind are mere outward show without intrinsic value. True Idealism is nothing more than the subordination of the interests and life of the individual to the Whole—*unter die Gesamtheit*—and it alone brings men to a spontaneous acknowledgment of the prerogative rights of Strength and Force—*zur freiwilligen Anerkennung des Vorrechtes der Kraft und der Stärke*—and causes them to become an atom (*Stäubchen*) in that Order which forms and shapes the Universe.¹

Little if anything in all this is really new. The basis of these doctrines can be found in Hegel and Fichte. Hegel's exaltation of the State is notorious. According to him 'the State is the divine Idea as it exists on earth' and 'all the worth which the human being possesses, all spiritual reality, he possesses only through the State'.²

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 421, 326-328 (translation, pp. 321, 249-250).

² Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte* (ed. Karl Hegel, 1848), p. 49. McTaggart says of Hegel: 'The most significant feature of all his writings on the metaphysics of society is the low place he gives to the conscience and opinions of the individual' (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (1901), p. 148).

The unity of the State is an end in itself (*Selbstzweck*), and 'this ultimate end (*Endzweck*) has the highest right against individuals, whose highest duty it is to be members of the State'. Only as a member of the State has the individual objectivity, truth and realized moral life (*Objektivität, Wahrheit und Sittlichkeit*). It is the vocation of individuals to lead a general life—*die Bestimmung der Individuen ist, ein allgemeines Leben zu führen*.¹ In Fichte (after he had abandoned his earlier individualistic conceptions) we find yet closer approximations to the rhapsodies of *Mein Kampf*. There is the same scorn for the ordinary life and interests of individuals, the same mystical conception of the Folk, the same vague language about the 'Idea', the same glorification of sacrifice upon the altar of the whole. That Hitler has been directly inspired by Fichte seems very probable. From the humiliations of Versailles it would be natural to turn to the prophet who had given the German people new hope after their humiliation at the hands of Napoleon.²

The quintessence of totalitarianism can be found in Fichte's *Foundations of the Present Age*, which he delivered as lectures in 1804-1805. 'The individual', we are told, 'does not really exist, as it is worth nothing and ought to perish: the Species (*Gattung*) alone exists since it alone

¹ Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechts* (ed. E. Gans, 1854), p. 306.

² In the winter of 1807-1808, when Fichte delivered the lectures he calls *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, there was a French garrison in Berlin.

ought to be considered as existing.¹ 'The life according to reason consists in this—that the Individual (*die Person*) forgets himself in the Species, devotes his life to the life of the Whole and sacrifices it to that.' 'There is only one virtue—to forget oneself as a person—and only one vice—to think of oneself.' He who 'desires any life and being and any single self-gratification except in the Species and for the Species, with whatever other good works he seeks to veil his deformity, is yet at bottom a common, petty, evil and therewith unhappy man' (*ein gemeiner, kleiner, schlechter und dabei unseliger Mann*).² To forget oneself in others, however, does not mean forgetting oneself in them as persons (where it is still a matter of personal individuality) but in them considered as the Species—*sondern als Gattung genommen*. Love of family or friends, as it involves sacrifice, may help to break down the hardest and coarsest forms of egoism. But this love is far removed from that which should embrace Humanity without distinction of persons and as Species: it is only a vestibule, though a necessary vestibule, to the higher life which embraces the Species as Species. The life of the Species is expressed in Ideas, and devoting one's life to the Species means devoting it to Ideas; and thus the life according to Reason—the right, good, and true life—consists in forgetting oneself in Ideas and neither

¹ Fichte, *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (Fichte's *Werke*, ed. J. H. Fichte, Bd. vii, 1846), pp. 37–38 (translation by W. Smith in *The Popular Works of J. G. Fichte*, vol. II, 1859, p. 36).

² *Ibid.* p. 35 (translation, pp. 33–34).

seeking nor knowing any gratification save in them and in the sacrifice of all other gratifications of life for them.¹

All this comes from the third lecture. Perhaps some of Fichte's audience may have reflected on the contrast between the stupendous austerity of his doctrine and the warm humanity of the Christian ideal of self-sacrifice as expressed in the saying: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend.' But if any felt that they were being asked to breathe an atmosphere rarified beyond human endurance, some of the later lectures brought them down, as it were from the cloud-wrapped crags of Berchtesgaden to a 'Keller' in Munich. The function of the State, Fichte now tells us, is to direct all individual powers to the life of the Species, which is the same thing as saying 'to its own life as State'. And since we cannot count on the activity of the Idea in the minds of men, the State must use compulsion.² The end of the State is that of the Human Race itself—that all its relations shall be regulated according to the laws of Reason. But only in a future age, belonging to a higher phase of development, will the State be conscious of this end, which until then it promotes unconsciously. It seeks its own preservation, but Nature has inseparably linked this to the end of the whole Species, so that the State, while thinking only of itself, indirectly promotes

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 36-37 (translation, pp. 35-36).

² *Ibid.* pp. 144-145 (translation, pp. 147-149).

the primary end of the Human Race.¹ Seeking its own preservation the State is in natural warfare—in *natürlichen Kriege*—with the surrounding Barbarism. Even when it has nothing more to fear from this outward barbarism, and perhaps is 'severed from it by broad seas', it will nevertheless seek out the barbarians and appropriate their surplus products or their land, or else subjugate their strength directly through slavery and indirectly through over-reaching commerce. 'However unjust these ends may appear in themselves,' says Fichte, 'yet thereby the first foundation of the World Plan—the general spread of Culture—will be gradually advanced.'²

Having dealt in this way with barbarism, Fichte, in his fourteenth lecture, proceeds to consider the relations of civilized states with one another. And 'first and foremost', he tells us, 'it is the necessary tendency of every civilized State to expand generally and to take into its own civic unity everything which lies to hand'.³ Every State strives either after Universal Monarchy, or at least to get the power of striving after it. The less powerful States try to maintain a balance of power until they are strong enough to upset it themselves. This is

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 161-162 (translation, pp. 166-167). The 'invisible hand' of Adam Smith's individualism is thus conceived as guiding, not the individual, but the State.

² *Ibid.* pp. 162-163 (translation, pp. 167-168). Fichte thus transcends Mandeville as well as Adam Smith, and gives us, so to say, a 'Fable of the Wasps, or Public Vices World-Benefits'.

³ *Ibid.* p. 201 (translation, p. 208).

'the natural and necessary course of things'—*der natürliche und nothwendige Gang*. It makes no difference that a state solemnly affirms its love of peace and declares it has no desire to enlarge its frontiers, when it is on the point of doing the opposite. One must talk like this and conceal a purpose if one wishes to attain it; and the well-known saying: 'Threaten war that you may have peace' can be turned into 'Promise peace, in order that you may begin war with advantage'. And the promises may be quite sincere—until a favourable opportunity for expansion occurs.¹

Of such are the worshippers of Moloch who are threatening the foundations of Democracy. It is strange to reflect how much misery might have been avoided, if, instead of following these aspiring prophets, the Germans and their rulers had been guided by the sedate Victorian common sense of Anthony Trollope's pedestrian observation that 'till we can become divine we must be content to be human, lest in our hurry for a change we sink to something lower'.²

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 203-204 (translation, pp. 211-212).

² *Barchester Towers* (York Library), p. 467.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PORTICOS OF MOLOCH'S TEMPLE

MYSTIC exaltation of the State, the Race or some other social Whole has for many generations played a large part in German thought and feeling and is the essence of contemporary totalitarianism. To Englishmen, rooted in traditions of liberty, respectful of the individual conscience, and seldom affected by any neurotic tendency to spurn the comforts of life as evil, these cloudy visions are always suspect. And now that the Germans have once more revealed the true bearing of these doctrines and have once more shown how those who are inspired by this faith become in the end 'Death's staunch purveyors', it may well seem that we are in no danger of taking Moloch for our god. But if we look upon these manifestations of thought and action merely as part of Germany's 'black record', and thank our God that we are not as they, we shall ourselves be taking a step in the totalitarian direction. For we shall be virtually accepting that part of the Nazi creed which maintains that even on the same plane of civilization there are fundamentally superior and inferior races, and shall be denying the truth, which is proclaimed alike by the Democrat's faith in the humanity of men and by the Christian faith in the fatherhood of God, that 'there is no difference between

the Jew and the Greek', but that all may attain to a condition 'where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free'.

Our common nature shows itself in common liability to error as well as in common potentiality for good; and in the great modern movement of Collectivism, neither the discoveries of social truth which are embodied in the wonderful achievement of the social services, nor those false developments of which the theory and practice of the Nazis form so detestable an exemplar, can rightly be regarded as peculiar to any one people. It is indeed a characteristic of epoch-making revolutions in the history of ideas that, within the limits of the historic period whose form and pressure they so largely determine, their influence is manifested in multitudinous ways and can be traced among various peoples and under the most diverse conditions. This was so in the age of Individualism; and it is true of the era in which we live and of the Collectivism by which it is dominated.

During the early years of the present century the academic study of political philosophy in England was much influenced by conceptions derived from Hegel. In particular, Bernard Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State*, which was published in 1899, by its combination of eloquence and moral fervour with a certain flattering obscurity powerfully attracted students

towards theories which, while exalting the State, dissolved the liberty of individual men into a form of obedience, and clothed the service of the political community with a cloud of glory so dazzling that the primary moral distinction between the willing and the compelled was often lost to sight in its golden haze. But the war of 1914-1918 flung back the veil which had concealed the idol in the Temple of Moloch; and the pungent criticism of Hegel and Bosanquet in L. T. Hobhouse's *Metaphysical Theory of the State*, which was first published in 1918, has done much to restore a spirit of sanity and proportion to academic thought about politics in this country. Yet the tendencies, of which totalitarian collectivism is the extreme expression, can be traced in many other manifestations of thought and opinion besides the direct exaltation of the State as an object of worship; and if that which is true and helpful in collectivism is in the future to be separated from that which is false, the roots of error must be sought out in all places where they lurk and their essential character brought to light. Collectivism corrected the bias of the old individualism by revealing the deeply social nature of man. But from the discovery that the individual 'is what he is because of and by virtue of community' and that the life of man is poor and brutish unless it becomes a life of fellowship with others, there has developed a tendency to regard the community as an end in itself and to think of it as possessing a life of its own, compared with which the

self-conscious life of the individual is of little value. The truth contained in individualism thus tends to be rejected along with the errors which were its bane. The fact that there is no thinking or feeling, no happiness or suffering, and no place for moral responsibility, except in the conscious mind of the individual, appears to be ignored; so that the unique quality of the individual self-consciousness is tacitly denied. Instead of the community existing—as in Democracy the Government should exist—‘for the People’, it is the people who exist for the sake of the community, and that not only in the sense that the virtue and happiness of the individual is to be found chiefly in work which makes the community a better means to the welfare of his fellow-men, but in the sense that he and his fellow-men are essentially a means to the good of the whole, much as the parts of an organism are means to the life of the whole organism, in which they share only in an inferior degree. The theories in which these modes of thought are to be found are usually not a little foggy and their advocates seem to shrink from the crucial test of concrete examples which would establish their meaning with precision, so it is hard to say exactly how far they would in fact admit what seem to be the implications of their doctrines. But there can be no doubt about the strength and direction of this tendency of thought. And while totalitarian exaltation of the State is the most striking embodiment of this distorted collectivism, it is an instructive illustration of the

far-reaching influence of the ideas in question that they have been made the basis of a type of social theory, which, so far from exalting the political state, definitely challenges its authority, denies its omniscience, and drags it down, as it were, from its throne of isolation to make it only one among many competing social groups. In all this there is a curious parallel to the history of individualism as embodied in the theory of a Social Contract. Just as the falsity of that theory is rooted in its postulate of a non-existent being—the individual who, though living without social relationships, is yet a fully developed man—so also the type of collectivism under discussion is false because it too postulates a non-existent being in the Super-Person of the State, the Race, or the Corporation. And just as the Social Contract was twisted to suit the most opposite conclusions, being employed most frequently as a bulwark against the authority of the State, but by Hobbes as a prop of absolute sovereignty; so also the theory of collective Super-Personality appears now as the vindicator of the totalitarian state, now as the champion of churches, trade unions and other groups against its claim to supremacy.

The theory of Corporate Personality has had a long history in the sphere of juridical studies and is especially associated with the name of the great German jurist Otto Gierke; but its extension to the sphere of political philosophy, and its employment in support of other groups against the State, owe much to an English

thinker, J. N. Figgis, whose *Churches in the Modern State* was first published in 1913. Figgis was zealous for the rights of churches, and he was impressed by the falsity of the view in which the social life of men appears merely as a relation between individuals and the State. He contended that 'in England at least' smaller associations than the State 'have always counted for most in the life of the individual'. 'His school or college,' he writes, 'his parish or county, his union or regiment, his wife or family is the most vitally formative part in the life of most men; and in so far as England has anything worthy in civic life to show to the world, it is the spectacle of individuals bred up or living within these small associations which mould the life of men more intimately than does the great collectivity we call the State.' For theoretic explanation of these various social groupings or associations Figgis turned to the conception of legal personality by means of which groups of persons such as a college or a joint-stock company are enabled to hold and administer property and to sue and be sued in the courts; and he eagerly embraced the views of jurists such as Gierke, Maitland and Geldart who argued that this legal personality was not a fiction created for legal convenience by a fiat of the sovereign state, but was something that associations necessarily acquired for themselves in virtue of the nature of their association. But he further contended that 'these groups (or many of them) live with a real life', that it is 'a real life and personality' which they

'are forced to claim' and which 'we believe that they possess by the nature of the case and not by the arbitrary grant of the sovereign', and indeed that they have 'a life greater than the mere sum of the individuals composing the body'. 'To deny this real life', he said, 'is to be false to the facts of social existence, and is of the same nature as that denial of human personality which we call slavery.'¹

It is astonishing that Figgis never perceived how little the juridical conception of 'personality' was really suited to his purpose. It sharply divides associations into two classes—those which are 'persons' and those which are not—but this dichotomy, though appropriate to the purposes of law, plays havoc with those 'facts of social existence' to which Figgis professed to appeal, if it is employed as a means of explaining the real nature of groups. For nothing is more certain about human associations than the fact that (if we have regard to the qualities of vitality and importance for the lives of their members upon which Figgis laid stress) they are far indeed from falling into two sharply contrasted classes, and on the contrary possess these attributes in infinitely varying degree. Moreover there appears to be no kind of relation between the measure in which any particular association possesses them and the measure of its capacity for legal personality. No social group is more important or more closely knit than the family in the most restricted sense of the word,

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 47-48, 87-88, 42, 41.

but families as such are not usually 'subjects of rights', while on the other hand two uncles who belong to different branches of the wider family, and are only slightly acquainted with one another, may as trustees or executors need and possess the power of joint action in the courts, although they may be associated rather as representatives of interests which may become divergent than as being interpenetrated with the spirit of a common life.¹

These considerations illustrate the weakness of the position which Figgis maintained; but it is his failure to distinguish legal personality from psychological and moral personality which is really significant, and it is this which justifies us in regarding his theory as having the same root as those very totalitarian conceptions which it appears to challenge. Like them it sets up a Super-Entity above the individual; and like them it ignores the unique value of self-consciousness. For legal personality can only be confused with personality in its psychological and moral fulness, or equated with the latter in value, if the essence of personality is judged to reside, not in self-consciousness, but in those capacities for external action which belong to

¹ One is tempted to ask whether the 'Catholic Church' (in any sense of the term which an Anglo-Catholic like Figgis could accept), has, or under existing conditions can be conceived as having, capacity for legal personality in any system of law. The Dean and Chapter of a Cathedral are of course a legal person, but that is a different matter; and it should be noted that Figgis speaks of 'the pernicious fact of the parson's freehold' (p. 168).

legal personality (whether corporate or individual) as well as to the personality of the self-conscious individual man.¹

The churches and gild-chapels which Figgis tried to build in the beauty of holiness and freedom thus prove to be porticos of the Temple of Moloch. But lest it should be thought that errors of this kind can easily be avoided if we refuse to be guided by the dim candles of ecclesiasticism and walk in the bright light of Science along the open highway of modern emancipation, the following passage may be cited from the writings of an eminent scientist who is also a well-known communist:

Now, if the co-operation of some thousands of millions of cells in our brain can produce our consciousness, the idea becomes vastly more plausible that the co-operation of humanity, or some sections of it, may determine what Comte called a Great Being. Just as, according to the teachings of physiology, the unity of the body is not due to a soul superadded to the life of the cells, so the superhuman if it existed, would be

¹ Besides confusing legal and psychological personality, Figgis appears to confuse the question whether legal persons are what they are in reality or merely by legal 'fiction', with the quite different question whether they are real persons in the full sense of personality. For the whole subject see Dr Ernest Barker's *Introduction* to his translation of Gierke's *Natural Law and the Theory of Society* (1934), pp. lvii-lxxxvii. Reference may also be made to F. Hallis, *Corporate Personality: A Study in Jurisprudence* (1930), especially p. 240, and to A. G. Heath, *The Moral and Social Significance of the Conception of Personality* (1921), pp. 89-97.

nothing external to man, or even existing apart from human co-operation. But to my mind the teaching of science is very emphatic that such a Great Being may be a fact as real as the individual consciousness, although, of course, there is no positive scientific evidence for the existence of such a being. And it seems to me that everywhere ethical experience testifies to a super-individual reality of some kind. The good life, if not necessarily self-denial, is always self-transcendence.

Further explanation is added as follows:

A scientific morality which proclaimed that man existed as part of a greater aggregate could yet admit that he had claims as an individual. The cells in our body co-operate in its life, but yet live, so to speak, very comfortably as compared with individualistic protozoa. And as long as I act in general, as a member of society, I believe that I shall do so the better and not the worse, for having a good dinner and taking holidays. If the Great Being is wholly independent of individual men, their well-being must be disregarded in its service. If it exists through them, and only through them, their rights are its rights. The morality of the future will, I believe, contain elements of both Greek and Christian moralities. The vague conception of the mean will be rendered exact by quantitative science, and the ideal of self-sacrifice will perhaps be rationalized as co-operation in a real and intelligible super-individual reality.¹

There is no mistaking the affinities of these doctrines. Though man is allowed some 'claims as an individual'

¹ J. B. S. Haldane, *The Inequality of Man and Other Essays* (1932), pp. 113-114, 117-118 (from a lecture delivered originally in 1928).

and the prospect is one of good dinners and holidays rather than the 'misery of the soaking trench', these concessions seem to be justified only because they are likely to make the individual a more complacent and efficient cell in the body of the great Leviathan: the principle, in short, is that of *Kraft durch Freude*. And not the least significant point in Professor Haldane's Credo is his suggestion that the Great Being may come into existence through the 'co-operation', not of all humanity, but of 'some sections of it'. Does this mean a *Herren-Volk*—not a chosen race, perhaps, but a Church of the Faithful? And if so, what will be the relation of the Elect to the other sections of mankind, who remain outside the great organism in an 'all too human' condition? Will the latter be made to serve the Great Being, not as cells and members of his body, but as perpetual Helots? Or will there be just one war of extermination, before we settle down, as good cells, to our dinners and our holidays?

The plain man will perhaps take comfort from Professor Haldane's admission in regard to his Utopia that 'to-day we are very far from any such blessed condition'. But plain people are no more exempt than ecclesiastics or biologists from the current superstitions of the age in which they live. And the tendency to exalt some Social Whole or Group, to think of it as an end in itself, and to forget the unique quality and value of the self-conscious individual, can be discerned in popular conceptions, and even in institutions and

policies, as well as in the lucubrations of theorists. The ordinary Marxist notion of 'Class' is a case in point. The 'Proletariat' and the 'Capitalist Class' is each regarded as having an interest and will of its own which has little relation to the actual thoughts and feelings of the men and women of whom the class is supposed to consist. Indeed Marxists seem to believe, perhaps without knowing it, in something rather like the Hegelian doctrine of the 'real will': the will of the Proletariat is not what we might suppose it to be from the actual opinions or votes of working people, but rather is what they ought to will and would will if they were adherents of the Marxian gospel. Again, modern economic protectionism, in the mind of its less well-informed supporters, appears to rest, at least in part, upon pre-suppositions about national wealth and the balance of trade, in which attention is concentrated upon the nation as a unit, so that wealth tends to be regarded as something for which nations struggle *inter se*, and economic activity within each nation, and the economic relations of individuals as producers and consumers, are almost left out of account. The economics of the man in the street has not yet been purged of that error of the mercantilists which 'lay in confounding a balance of exports over imports with a surplus of production over consumption'.¹ Or, if we look in a very different direction—one in which we

¹ E. R. A. Seligman, *Principles of Economics* (3rd edition, 1907), p. 117.

should least of all expect to find any trace of the totalitarian virus—was there not in fact something of the same fatal tendency in the constitution of the Assembly of the League of Nations, in which each State had an equal number of votes whatever its population? Finally, if we probe into the deep places of our hearts and uncover with all reverence the sanctities of our feelings about those who fall in battle, can we be sure that the glory of their sacrifice is always seen by us as the moral splendour of the willing gift, and that there never mingles with our sense of that any feeling that there is something noble about the objective fact of their being sacrificed, so that the honour we should pay to them and their self-devotion is smirched, and the shrine of our memories becomes a place from which the defiling worship of Moloch is not wholly excluded?

The essence of Totalitarianism lies in mystic exaltation of the Race, the State, or some other Social Whole as an end in itself, compared with which the life of the individual is accounted of little value. Against this idolatrous religion Democracy sets an ideal of government deriving its authority from the will of the People and exercising all its powers for their welfare. It asks more of the citizen than is demanded by the rulers of any totalitarian state, for it asks for the free service of free men. But the end to which it directs their service is not the pursuit of some extraneous glory. Its aim is to promote the good life of individual human beings, who

are none the less individuals because the good life is a life of fellowship and mutual service. A belief in the rightness of that aim is part of the democratic faith. And the root of the matter may be found in some words written by a young English philosopher, who volunteered as a soldier within a week of the outbreak of war in 1914 and was killed by a German bullet in the autumn of the following year: 'Neither in the State nor in the Church nor any lesser grouping can you find a unit of value higher than the individual personality.'¹

¹ A. G. Heath, *op. cit.* p. 89, cp. pp. 97-98, 103.

CHAPTER IX

'E PUR SI MUOVE'

To those who are accustomed to think of human progress as closely associated with Democracy it seems strange that the forces opposed to Democracy should derive so much of their strength from the generous enthusiasm of youth. For, in general, the young are disposed to welcome change, while their elders, clinging to that which is old and tested, see peril rather than hope in uncharted waters. But though the definite enlistment of 'Youth Movements' in support of Totalitarianism is a new and disquieting portent, it is not really surprising that the young find it difficult to appreciate the democratic ideal in its fulness.

For one thing, Democracy, in its present stage of development, tends almost inevitably to prevent people from attaining positions of prominence and power until they are well advanced in middle age. It belongs to Democracy to open careers to talent irrespective of birth or wealth; but this means that able men have to make their way in the world, and, in the sphere of politics, have to make themselves known, before they can find real scope for their abilities; and the more we approach towards equalization of opportunities and make a man's advancement in society

depend upon what he is, and not upon the circumstances of his birth, the greater is the time consumed in the process of selection. The ladder of promotion in a Democracy takes longer to scale than the steep back-stairs of privilege and favour by which men climb to positions of influence in an aristocratic society. The younger Pitt, because he was his father's son, became Chancellor of the Exchequer at 23 and was Prime Minister before he was 25. In a democratic state that would be almost unthinkable. In the future the development of education and increased faith in educational tests may perhaps make possible a more rapid promotion of ability than has hitherto been attainable by democratic methods; but for the present the tendency to keep power in the hands of elderly persons must be reckoned as one of the factors which makes Democracy seem unsympathetic to the young.¹

¹ In the fifty-nine years of George III's reign there were thirteen Prime Ministers besides the younger Pitt. The average age at which they first attained that office is 45: three (besides Pitt) were under 40; and Pitt's inclusion only reduces the average to 43½. In the sixty years 1881-1941 there have been twelve Prime Ministers: their average age on their first attainment of the office is 58; and only Rosebery (46) was under 50. For the Lord Chancellorship the averages are 52 for the earlier period and 60 for the later. In another sphere one notes that Marlborough became Commander-in-Chief of the home forces at 39; that Wolfe was 32 when he fell on the Heights of Abraham; and that Wellington was 39 when he assumed supreme command in the Peninsula; while, on the other hand, Roberts was 67 when he went to South Africa, French 61 when he took command of the B.E.F. in 1914, and Haig 54 when he succeeded him.

There are, however, deeper reasons for the undemocratic bias of youthful minds. Youth is impetuous as well as chivalrous and warm-hearted. Shocked by the spectacle of human suffering and wrong, the young regard a frontal attack upon the evil thing as an immediate duty, forgetting that Balaclava charges may be as disastrous in social reform as in war. To this crusading temper the methods of Democracy appear intolerably protracted; and the practical wisdom which waits until public opinion is ripe for change, refrains from outraging minorities, and in this way safeguards progress against reaction, is condemned either as a symptom of insincerity or as mere pandering to the forces of darkness.

Further, if the young have splendid visions of the future, their experience of the present and their knowledge of the past are restricted; and for that reason they commonly underrate the positive achievements of Democracy. An appeal to experience is always irritating to youth; but the facts within a person's experience usually seem more real than what he reads about in books; and to those whose experience is limited to a few years the world seems stationary, just because it takes time for progress to be noticeable. Nor is this impression corrected by statistical demonstration, for percentages and wage-curves lack flesh and blood and do not stir the feelings like the hollow eyes and hopeless air of the unemployed man to whom you have actually talked. So the middle-aged can only

repeat the words of Galileo: *E pur si muove*, and set against the limited experience of the younger generation an experience which can compare the social conditions of the present with those obtaining in the early years of the century. To any observant person who can make that comparison nothing is more certain than the reality of the social progress that has taken place within the last few decades; and if the observer is an historian, he will find it difficult to name any previous period in which the advance was either so rapid or so sure.

A man who is between 50 and 60 to-day can remember an England without old-age pensions—an England in which there was no state-aided system of insurance either for the sick or for the unemployed and no legal minimum wage in any industry. If he happens to have lived in an Oxfordshire village, he will recollect that when war came in 1914 the regular wage of the farm labourers who were his neighbours was twelve shillings a week, and that in the winter of 1913-1914 the proposal to establish a legal minimum wage of a pound—'the Labourer's Quid'—was regarded by many as a Utopian fantasy. And he compares this state of things with the condition of agricultural workers when war came again twenty-five years later, and notes that agricultural minimum wage rates were by then in force throughout the country and that in no part of England was the rate lower than 33s., although the cost of living at the beginning of

September 1939, was only 55 per cent greater than it had been in July, 1914.¹ Or, again, he reflects that within his lifetime it was lawful to employ children in factories at 10 years old, that it is only within the present century that the minimum age was raised from 11 to 12, and that now it is 14. He thinks too of the decline in infant mortality. In 1898, described by Professor Clapham as 'the healthiest year of the late nineties', the rate of infant mortality in England and Wales was 148 per thousand births. By 1908 it was 120 and in 1938 only 53. Then his mind turns to the schools, and if he feels dissatisfied (as he should) with a school-leaving age of 14, he will still not forget that until the last year of the nineteenth century it was only 11, and that it was only the Fisher Act of 1918 which really secured attendance up to 14 by providing for the abolition of all forms of exemption. Nor can he overlook the growth of secondary education. The development between 1902 and 1922 was described in a volume edited by Professor Tawney for the Education Advisory Committee of the Labour Party as 'something like an educational revolution' and the discerning eye of Halévy saw even in the earlier results of the Act of 1902 'a social revolution of the first

¹ On June 30, 1940 a national minimum wage of 48s. was established for agricultural workers: this has now (August, 1941) been exceeded in 14 counties; and the need for a further general rise is being strongly urged. The cost of living was on July 1, 1940, 87 per cent, and on July 1, 1941, 99 per cent, greater than in July, 1914.

magnitude'.¹ But things have moved forward since then. In 1920-1921 the number of pupils in grant-aided secondary schools in England and Wales was 337,000. By 1937 the number had risen to 466,000, of whom 77 per cent had come from the elementary schools. Looking in another direction, our middle-aged man will consider the changes that have taken place in the taxation of the rich. When Snowden published his *Socialist's Budget* in 1907, the standard rate of income-tax was a shilling in the pound, there was no super-tax or sur-tax, and the scale of estate duties was such that 4½ per cent was paid on a fortune of £50,000, 7½ per cent on one of £1,000,000, and 8 per cent if the estate exceeded £1,000,000. To-day the standard rate of income-tax is ten shillings in the pound; there is a graduated sur-tax which for 1940-41 is chargeable on income in excess of £2000 at rates varying from 2s. per pound for incomes under £2500 to 9s. 6d. for incomes exceeding £20,000; and the estate duty is 16.8 per cent for an estate of £50,000, 49.4 per cent for a fortune of a million, and from 52 per cent up to 65 per cent for estates exceeding a million. It is instructive to compare these figures with

¹ *Secondary Education for All: A Policy for Labour* (edited R. H. Tawney), p. 20; Halévy, *History of the English People, 1895-1905*, p. 205 (both quoted by G. A. N. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution* (1937), pp. 97-98). The number of pupils in the grant-aided secondary schools of England and Wales was 94,000 in 1905, 156,000 in 1910, and about 200,000 in 1914: see R. C. K. Ensor, *England 1870-1914* (1936), pp. 536-537.

the proposals which Snowden made in 1907. He wanted to tax incomes above £40,000 to the tune of 7s. in the pound (1s. income-tax plus 6s. super-tax); and he did not propose (at least at first) to levy super-tax on incomes under £5000. The scheme of estate duties which he advocated would take $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent from a fortune of £50,000, 25 per cent from £1,000,000, 50 per cent from estates of more than a million. And in those days Snowden ranked as an extremist.*

Yet it is not chiefly a consideration of measurable developments which induces the conviction that social progress is a reality in modern England. To one whose experience covers the period in question the decisive evidence is the change he notices in the mind and outlook, the morals and manners and habits, of the people he meets in everyday life. English society is becoming democratized in soul. Class distinctions seem to be passing away. The fruits of improved education can be recognized in a gradual disappearance of those differences in manners and culture and tone which thirty years ago made the bridging of classes something of an adventure. What remains of the old con-

* Philip Snowden, *The Socialist's Budget* (1907), pp. 37, 75-78. Snowden's proposed figures were already greatly exceeded (in most cases) before the present war. For example, in 1934-5 a millionaire with an income of £40,000 (all unearned) was liable for something like £21,000 a year in income-tax and sur-tax, and the estate duty payable on his death was £380,000, while in Snowden's scheme the income tax and super-tax would in this case be £11,000 and the estate duty £250,000.

sciousness of inferiority and superiority is of small account in comparison with that which has gone. The most conservative to-day are in some ways more radical than the radicals of the earlier epoch. 'If we speak of democracy, we do not mean a democracy which maintains the right to vote but forgets the right to work and the right to live. If we speak of freedom, we do not mean a rugged individualism which excludes social organization and economic planning. If we speak of equality, we do not mean a political equality nullified by social and economic privilege. If we speak of economic reconstruction, we think less of maximum production (though this too will be required) than of equitable distribution.' These sentences are not a quotation from some left-wing politician: they are extracted from a leading article in *The Times* of 1 July 1940.¹ 'I don't think there will be any class distinctions after the war, and a very good thing too: the time for that sort of thing

¹ This article (entitled 'The New Europe') does not stand alone. It should be compared with that on 'The Four Freedoms' published in *The Times* of 12 April 1941, which contained the following passage: 'The experience of the past two decades has proved beyond reasonable doubt that want and unemployment can be cured only through a far-reaching transformation of our financial and economic structure. . . . We have come to recognize that no society which made private profits and sectional interests the only mainspring of its economic life could emerge successful from the strain of modern war. And it is becoming clear that such a society would be equally incapable of realizing that "freedom from want" without which the other freedoms of democracy will not survive.'

is gone.' That remark was made the other day in conversation by a conservative lady over 80 years of age, who at 50 would have been aflame with horror and indignation at such egalitarian notions. Changes of this kind are not capable of exact proof or measurement. But an incident of the last war may serve to illustrate the distance we have travelled in sentiment. A London newspaper came out one day with a poster containing the words: *Give till it hurts you*. Further examination showed that this was an appeal to invest in war loan yielding 5 per cent interest. Is that attitude of mind conceivable to-day?

But the young, bored with such reminiscences, yet politely concealing their yawns, will reply: 'Oh yes: things do move a bit; but they always move too slowly.' And here age can heartily concur. Progress is never as rapid as it might be and ought to be. Yet it is also true that the danger of over-rapid change is never absent. There is always a danger of our pressing reforms at a pace which outruns the development of public opinion, or, in other words, of preferring the short-cuts of totalitarian methods to the ways of Democracy and of forgetting the deep truth which is implied when we speak of 'Government by the People, For the People' and not of 'Government by the Majority, For the Majority'. On the other hand, the growth of public opinion is itself capable of acceleration, and that to an extent to which it would be hard indeed to set any limit. We can never go too

far or too fast in educating the public conscience, or in the social research which shows us what it is wise to do. In those directions, youth can find tasks worthy of its 'celestial ardour'. But we shall be helped and not hindered by remembering the sagacious observation of Burke that 'those who will lead, must also, in a considerable degree, follow'. And finally there come to mind the words of a great modern economist: 'Neither by the timidity that waits at a distance, nor by the wild rush of undisciplined ardour, is the summit of great mountains attained. First we must understand our task and prepare for it; and then, in the glow of sunrise, by united effort, we shall at last, perhaps, achieve.'¹

¹ A. C. Pigou, *Wealth and Welfare* (1912), p. 488.

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